

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Purpose

This document sets out Ledbury Town Council's policy on recruitment and selection. The Council is committed to a policy of treating all its employees and job applicants equally and to recruit the best person for each vacancy.

No employee or potential employee shall receive less favourable treatment or consideration during recruitment and selection on the ground of race, colour, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, marital status or part-time status or will be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Equal Opportunities and Data Protection Policies. No decisions regarding recruitment or selection should be made by a person who has not read and understood this and related policies.

Scope

This policy is applicable to the recruitment and selection of all employees engaged to provide services for Ledbury Town Council, irrespective of whether the contract is for a temporary, fixed term, or permanent period. The policy will be made available to all employees and applies to both internal and external recruitment.

Policy Statement

This policy seeks to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for each job vacancy regardless of their personal characteristics. Existing employees will be invited to apply for promotion opportunities wherever possible.

Principles

The following principles will apply whenever recruitment or selection for positions takes place:

- Individuals will be shortlisted against the job requirements as laid out in the job descriptions and person specifications;
- Any qualifications or requirements applied to a job that have or may have the effect of inhibiting applications from certain groups of the population should only be retained if they can be justified in terms of the job to be done;
- Information on ethnic origin, sex, disability, and nationality will be collected in order to monitor the numbers of applications from different groups. This information will not be used in the selection process or for any other use other than this purpose.

- Selection tests may be used which are specifically related to job requirements and should measure the person's actual or inherent ability to do or train for work.
- If selection tests are used, these should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and free from bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism
- All recruiting managers and Councillors taking part in recruitment and selection will have been trained in interviewing skills and equal opportunities;
- Written records of interviews, reasons for decisions made at each stage of the process and reasons for appointment or non-appointment should be kept for six-months, unless a longer period can be justified and is in compliance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 1998. Records should then be disposed of confidentially;
- Interviews will assess candidates against job-related criteria;
- All information held about a candidate must be used only for the purpose of which the information has been collected;
- All candidates will be asked at the first interview stage to provide documentary evidence of their right to live and work in the UK, to ensure compliance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. A photocopy of the accepted documentation will be taken;
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to reduce any disadvantage faced by anyone registered as disabled in making an application in response to an advertisement;
- The recruitment and selection process for disabled candidates should take into account such adjustments to working arrangements or physical features of the work place/station/premises as are reasonable to accommodate their needs and be such that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled candidates;
- Decisions to interview, shortlist or offer employment will take no account of an applicant's trade union membership or non-membership.

Recruitment and Selection Process

The recruitment process should be followed in accordance with the following steps:

Preparation:

Formal authorisation to recruit to a post must be granted to the Town Clerk before advertising a vacancy.

If recruiting to the Town Clerk position, authority must be granted by the Mayor.

A job description should be produced with full details of the position, duties, reporting line, responsibilities of the job holder and number of direct reports, if applicable. The skills, experiences, qualifications and competencies of the job holder should be laid out in the person specification.

If necessary, for example in the case of a new post, the Resources Committee may be required to authorise the Job Description, Person Specification and advert.

Advertising:

Vacancies will be advertised in wherever it is deemed appropriate by the Resources Committee and/or the Town Clerk. Vacancies for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk roles will be advertised in one or more newspapers or journals circulating primarily among persons who may be expected to possess the necessary qualifications for that post, except where the Council otherwise determine, in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Applications:

Application forms are encouraged to be submitted via email, but hard copies of application forms are also acceptable.

The organisation will pay reasonable travel expenses for candidates travelling to interview.

Prior to the interview candidates will be provided with information about the role and responsibilities.

Selection and Interview:

A shortlisting form will be used to assess applicants objectively against the criteria set out in the person specification.

The interview panel should consist of two or three interviewers, including the line manager and the Town Clerk. If interviewing for the position of Deputy Clerk the interview panel will consist of the Town Clerk, The Mayor, and the Deputy Mayor. When interviewing for the position of Town Clerk the interview panel will consist of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and one other Councillor and the out-going Clerk as an adviser, if appropriate.

An interview question sheet will be designed by the Town Clerk based on the job description and person specification and the outcome recorded on a scoring sheet.

All interview documentation must be returned to the Town Clerk for secure storage and only those authorised will have access to this information.

Once an offer of acceptance has been made verbally, the Town Clerk will telephone unsuccessful candidates notifying them of the outcome. If candidates request feedback, this should be dealt with courteously and sensitively and based on the scoring form used for the interview questions.

Making the Appointment:

Upon selection of a suitable candidate the Town Clerk will contact the successful candidate and make an offer by telephone initially.

An offer of employment letter will be sent out once the position has been accepted, subject to references.

A contract of employment containing the written statement of main terms and conditions of employment will be provided for signature within 8-weeks of commencement in post in line with employment law.

References:

All offers are subject to two satisfactory references, a check on relevant qualifications and eligibility to work in the UK where applicable.

The Town Clerk of Mayor will apply for all references, which will be requested once applicants have indicated acceptance.

References will ideally come from current and/or previous employers, if applicable. If the references are not satisfactory, the offer may be revoked.

Induction:

Induction of new employees will start as soon as a candidate accepts a position.

All new starters will receive a timetable for their successful induction into their role and the Council.

Probation:

Probation periods will be set out in contracts of employment in line with the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. The standard probation is 6 months.

Date Adopted:

Date of Review:

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY

Ledbury Town Council recognises that its employees form a vital part in ensuring its commitment to the people of Ledbury is met. To this end it will encourage and develop initiatives to promote the health and wellbeing of all employees.

The aim of this policy is to minimise absence levels across the organisation, whilst providing support to those absence, with the primary aim of assisting a return to work at the earliest opportunity.

The policy will inform Ledbury Town Council employees of their own responsibilities in relation to sickness absence, and the relevant reporting mechanisms.

The Council will seek to ensure that the reasons for sickness absence are understood in each case and investigated where necessary.

Whilst there is a collective responsibility to minimise sickness absence all such absence will be monitored and dealt with fairly and effectively in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service.

Date Adopted
Review Date

SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Reporting Sickness Absence

If you are away from work because of illness you **MUST** telephone your line manager within 30 minutes of your usual start time. If your line manager is not available, you must speak to their line manager. If you are unable to make the call, in exceptional circumstances, you may ask someone to make it on your behalf. You must however make direct contact with your line manager as soon as possible thereafter. You can expect your line manager to make enquiries with you about work matters during the telephone call. Text messages, emails or indirect methods of communication are not acceptable.

The call should include:

- Name
- Nature of illness
- Likely duration of absence
- Work commitments that need to be covered during absence

If you are employed to work outside of normal office hours and you need to contact your line manager out of hours you will have been provided with a telephone number to call. However, if you are aware that you will not be well enough to attend work prior to that date you should make every effort to contact your line manager during working hours the previous day.

This process must be repeated on the 3rd day of absence unless you have provided an "fit note".

Certification and Medical Certificates

You must complete a sickness self-certification form for every period of sickness absence unless covered by a "fit note". Self-certification can only be made for periods of absence covering up to 7-calendar days.

A doctor's or hospital fit note is required if the absence is more than 7-calendar days. The certificate should be forwarded immediately after your 7th day of absence and will be required chronologically for all subsequent absences. Where there is a continuing sickness absence you must, therefore, submit consecutive fit notes to cover the whole period of absence and these must be sent to your line manager within 2-days of the previous note expiring.

Failure to notify sickness absence or provide self-certificates or fit notes may lead to the absence from work being considered as unauthorised, resulting in the loss of occupational sick pay and possible disciplinary investigation.

Hospitalisation

Employees who become hospitalised will need a fit note to cover their absence in hospital if exceeding 7 days. This can be provided by the hospital.

Accidents and Injuries

An employee who has an accident, incident or near miss (that could have resulted in injury or ill health) that occurs whilst they are at work must report it to their line manager at the earliest convenience. The incident can then be investigated to identify any action needed to prevent further injuries and ill health and to ensure that the incident is recorded in the accident book and reported as necessary.

Work Related Ill Health or Injury

If the employee or line manager believes that ill-health or injury has been caused by work the manager must complete the Council's accident report form as above. #

If the reason for absence is work related stress the line manager should complete a Stress Risk Assessment with the employee to endeavour to establish the root causes of the pressure. They must then refer the individual to Occupational Health sending the risk assessment in order to seek advice on how to support the employee and facilitate a return to work as soon as possible.

Contact with Infectious Diseases

Employees prevented from attending work due to contact with a reportable infectious disease should notify the Clerk immediately.

Monitoring Sickness Levels

All sickness absences must be recorded on the Council's monitoring system.

The information recorded will be used to produce sickness absence level statistics on a quarterly basis to monitor the success of the Sickness Absence Policy and identify any causes for concern. This information will be presented to the Council's Resources Committee on a quarterly basis.

Line managers will use this information to identify employees with frequent short-term absence which may require further investigation as set out within the sickness absence policy and procedures.

Return to Work

On the first day of your return to work, or at least within three days of your return, your will have a "return to work" interview with your line manager. This must be completed for any period of sickness absence, including short term sickness of one day only. The purpose of the interview is to assure both you and your manager that you are fit to return to work and to identify any concerns around your health that need to be addressed. All information will be recorded on the form and signed to show that you and your line manager agree. Any recommendations will be clearly stated.

If your absence was for less than 7 days, you will be asked to complete a self-certification form.

If your absence was medically certified your GP will provide you with a Statement of Fitness for Work, commonly known as a "Fit Note". In this your doctor may suggest ways of helping you return to work e.g.

- A phased return to work
- Altering hours
- Amended duties
- Workplace adaptations

There may also be recommendations following a referral to Occupational Health.

Where recommendations have been made by a doctor or Occupational Health Specialist, these are dependent on whether they are available and must have the Clerk's agreement. The Council will try to accommodate recommendations and support needed to facilitate a return to work.

Phased returns to work will normally be for a 4-week period and will be paid at normal salary regardless of days or hours worked in this period. Options during this time include reduced hours, different working days or adjusted worktimes and will be agreed between you and your line manager. Generally, the return to your normal pattern of work and contracted hours over a 4-week period.

If a phased return to work is recommended over a period more than 4-weeks, then salary will be based on the hours and days worked and not the normal salary. Arrangements can be considered to use annual leave, or any TOIL owed as part of this phased return which will need to be considered and agreed by the line manager and Clerk.

If the Council is unable to support the change(s) recommended by the doctor, the fit note will be interpreted as you not being fit for work. A further sicknote is not required but you will not be allowed to return to work until we have an occupational health opinion that you are fit for work, and you will continue to be classed as on sick absence.

Frequent and/or Persistent Short-term Sickness Absence

The Council may on reviewing your sickness record, take action if:

- There are three instances or 10 self-certified days of absence within 12 months;
- There emerges a regular pattern of recurring absences of if the reason given for absence gives rise for concern

First Stage Informal Interview

This will be an informal review meeting with your line manager who will advise you of their concerns. This meeting will be in addition to the Return to Work Interview.

The line manager will send a letter to the employee inviting them to the Review Meeting providing at least three clear days' notice. Representation is not required at this meeting. The line manager, HR Manager and the employee will discuss:

- The reasons for the repeat absences;
- The likelihood of further absences;
- Whether medical advice is required – Occupational Health, GP and whether there is any underlying condition;
- If any measures might improve the employee's health and/or attendance;
- A way forward, including the immediate improvement expected and a review date set;
- If a further sickness absence is recorded the disciplinary procedure may be followed.

The line manager may at any meeting escalate to the Formal Action stage if it appears the employee's attendance has not improved, without the need for a further meeting under the informal review stage.

Formal Action

If the informal review meeting has not led to any improvement in the sickness absence, the Council will make the matter a formal issue and follow the process outlined below.

Formal Sickness Review Stages

If there is insufficient improvement within the monitoring period in the employee's sickness absence record, a formal review will be held with the line manager where reasons for the continued absence levels will be explored.

Four or more occurrences will automatically trigger a Formal Review to discuss the sickness absence record.

In terms of the Formal Sickness Review Stages, the following will apply:

Stage 1 – Formal Action

The employee will be given a minimum of 7-days' notice inviting them to a meeting and advising the employee of the reason for the Formal Review, the date and time, their right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. The purpose of the formal review is:

- To highlight the unacceptable level of attendance
- Explain the impact of the levels of absence on service delivery
- Explain future attendance will be monitored and reviewed
- Advise the employee of the future consequences if the employee continues with this level of attendance

At the end of the meeting, the line manager will consider all aspects of the case and may decide to take no action if further information is required, i.e. GP or Occupational Health assessment etc.

The line manager may issue a formal ***First Written Warning*** where, despite previous discussions, the employee has failed to improve their sickness absence levels and their attendance is unsatisfactory.

The line manager will write to the employee within 7 calendar days of the Formal Review meeting confirming:

- The points discussed
- The unsatisfactory sickness absence record
- Actions agreed
- The first written warning (if issued) will be valid for six months
- That a sustained improvement is expected within timeframes
- The employee's right to appeal
- That failure to improve will normally lead to a final written warning for unsatisfactory attendance and performance to undertake their duties

If attendance improves, the process will end at Stage 1 Formal Action.

If required improvements are not demonstrated, then Stage 2 Formal Action will be followed.

Stage 2 Formal Action

The employee will be given a minimum of seven days' notice inviting them to a second meeting, advising them of the reasons for the second formal review, date and time, and their right to be accompanied. The purpose of the formal review is to discuss:

- Why attendance levels continue to be unacceptable
- What progress has been made towards improving attendance and what further improvement is required to meet the standard of attendance required
- Assess whether an improvement is likely
- Obtain views from the employee in relation to any circumstances or reasons that may be affecting attendance

At the end of the meeting, the line manager will consider all aspects of the case and may decide to:

- Take no further action
- To extend the monitoring period
- To obtain further medical information from a GP or Occupational Health assessment etc. (if appropriate)
- That the employee needs further advice and/or support
- To issue a First or Final Written Warning which will be valid for twelve months

The line manager will write to the employee within 7 calendar days of the Formal Review meeting confirming the outcome.

If the line manager issues a formal First or Final Written Warning, the required improvements and monitoring procedures will be agreed and the employee will be

given an opportunity to reach the required standard. The Final Written Warning will be held on file for 12 months.

Stage 3 Case Review Hearing

Where the required attendance is still not being met and the employee has had a final warning issued at Stage 2 Formal Action, then Stage 3 will be invoked which is a Case Review Hearing.

The purpose of the Case Review Hearing will be to consider whether there are any further actions that the Council can take to assist the employee in continuing their employment or whether employment should be terminated due to the employee's incapability to undertake their duties effectively because of ill health.

The line manager, Town Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor will hear the final review hearing.

The employee will be given a minimum of seven days' notice of the meeting and advising the employee of the reason for the Case Review Hearing, date and time, their right to be accompanied, and that their employment may be terminated and the right of appeal.

Copies of the report and the case to be presented will be sent to the employee and attendees at least seven days before the Case Review Hearing.

The decision will be communicated at the meeting with the employee and their colleague/trade union representative whenever practical. In all instances, employees will be treated in a fair and reasonable manner appropriate to their particular case. The decision will be confirmed in writing within 7 days of the meeting.

Where, as a result of a Case Review Hearing, the decision has been taken to terminate employment, the employee will be notified of the reasons for this decision and their right of appeal. In order to exercise this right, the employee must write to the Clerk within 14 days of receipt of the letter confirming dismissal. The employee must state their grounds for their appeal.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy related sickness will be recorded separately from other sickness absence details (inclusive of attendance at antenatal appointments) and will not be included in terms of Ledbury Town Council's trigger system. The line manager will ensure a Health & Safety Risk Assessment is completed upon notification of pregnancy, at the four months and seven months stages.

Disability

Disability related sickness records will be recorded separately from other sickness absence details and will not be included in the trigger system. However, review meetings will be held with the employee and line manager to discuss the level of absence and impact on productivity. Ledbury Town Council will assist, where

possible, in making reasonable employee adjustments to support an employee with a disability to continue working, i.e. Access to Work Claim.

Access to Work

Access to work is a government scheme that helps cover the cost of providing disability solutions that would otherwise not be considered a "reasonable adjustment" under the Equality Act 2010 (www.gov.uk/across-to-work).

The line manager will discuss eligibility with the employee. The employee would then need to make an application to Access to Work. If successful, Access to Work will liaise with the line manager and/or Town Clerk to visit the employee's workplace.

Long term sickness absence

Sickness absence lasting over four weeks is considered Long Term. The wellbeing of all employees is of prime concern to the Council and any individual who is unfortunate enough to be away from work because of long term sickness will be contacted regularly by their line manager or a senior manager who will discuss:

- The length of expected absence
- Developments at work
- The requirements of the Council for further medical examinations

This will only be done with express consent of the employee and conducted in a very sensitive way to avoid any stress.

The line manager will seek to make telephone contact with the employee after two weeks to keep in touch and to conduct a home visit at four weeks. Progress will then be reviewed formally on a monthly basis.

Medical Examination

The Council, as an employer has the right to seek a second or further medical opinion if an employee has been absent for or is expected to be absent for a continuous period of 2 months or a total of 42 days within any 12 month period.

Occupational Health

Occupational Health is a specialist branch of medicine focusing on health in the workplace. It is concerned with the physical and mental wellbeing of employees.

The line manager will make a referral to Occupational Health if an employee is absent from work due to long term sickness and if this is deemed appropriate or would provide useful medical information or when absence from work is occurring on an above average frequency. Likewise, any problems which are health, disability or injury related and which appear to be affecting performance or attendance may be discussed with an employee and considered for referral.

When an employee is absent from work, they may be referred to Occupational Health before they return to work, to discuss their absence and potential return to work and if a phased return is recommended. This may not always be possible due to the difficulty of obtaining an appointment in time. In such cases, an appointment will be made as soon as possible after returning to work.

Once a referral has been made the employee will be contacted directly by the Line Manager with an appointment date and time. The line manager will be notified if these offers of appointment are refused or not attended as scheduled. A consent form will be completed prior to obtaining a medical report.

The Occupational Health Service will then send a report detailing the outcome of the appointment to both the employee and the line manager. This report may be discussed if appropriate with the Clerk and the employee's line manager to agree a way forward. All matters will be treated in strict confidence.

Taking into account advice received from Occupational Health or other medical examination, a further discussion will take place with the line manager to discuss the position.

One or more of the following actions may be taken:

- A further review period set
- A phased return to work or practical reasonable adjustments
- Other appropriate support mechanisms
- Investigations as to whether the employee is eligible for ill health retirement pension benefits
- Case Review Hearing to be set up

The line manager will discuss any actions contemplated with the employee before any decisions are made.

The Council may choose one of two routes in respect of Occupational Health Assessment and this can be dependent on the reason for the long-term sickness. If it is likely that the employee will make a full recovery and return to their normal role within the Council, the line manager may choose the "Fit for work Route".

Alternatively, if the employee has already been referred for a "Fit for Work" assessment within the last 12 months or their medical condition is deemed to be of a more serious nature then the line manager will be required to use the Council's nominated Occupational Health provider.

Fit for Work Assessment

"Fit for Work" assessment is a free referral for an occupational health assessment for employees who have reached, or whose GP expects them to reach, four weeks of sickness absence. The service is aimed at helping employees return to work sooner. Employees may be referred by their GP or employer.

To enable an employer to make the referral for Fit for Work Assessment the following consent is required at all stages:

- Before referral to Fit for Work by employees GP or Employer
- Before the initial assessment takes place
- Before each version of the Return to Work Plan is shared with GP and employer
- Before Fit for Works contacts GP or employer or any third party if this is necessary as part of the assessment

Following assessment, a return to work plan may be prepared, however it is not mandatory that this is followed. The return to work plan is designed to assist the employee's return to work sooner. Once a return to work plan has been prepared and the employee and employer and GP agree to implement it there will no longer be a requirement for the employee to provide a Fit for Work note.

Employers and employees are advised to familiarise themselves with the "Fit for Work" guidance notes provided by the Department for Work and Pensions for both employers and employees and to use them in conjunction with this policy when appropriate (copies can be obtained from line manager).

Sickness immediately prior to or during annual leave

If an employee is ill during a period of pre-arranged annual leave it is permissible to treat the days of incapacity as sickness absence instead of annual leave, subject to the provision of a medical certificate which covers the full period of sickness. Please note this will not be the case for non-certified absence. This will enable the Council to arrange alternative leave dates, subject to the demands of the business.

If an employee falls ill whilst on annual leave travelling abroad, they must produce acceptable documentation signed by an accredited medical practitioner, together with the employee's name and contact details. This should also state whether they employee is fit to travel. If declared unfit to travel, the certificate must give an indication of the date the employee is likely to travel, if this is after the last authorised day of leave. When employees return to the UK, they are required to submit a Fit Note by their own GP in order to return to work.

Employees will continue to accrue annual leave (excluding bank holidays) at their normal rate whilst on sick leave in accordance with legislation.

Where, as a direct result of long term sickness absence, employees have been prevented from taking their holiday entitlement, it may be possible for an employee to carry forward/be paid (dependent on the amount of annual leave) the statutory element of their remaining annual leave entitlement into the next annual leave year, however this will be determined by the Clerk and/or the Resources Committee.

Sick Pay Entitlement (in accordance with the National Joint Council Pay and Conditions – "The Green Book")

During the first year of service (After completing 4 months service)	1 month's full pay 2 months half pay
During the second year of service	2 months full pay 2 months half pay
During the third year of service	4 months full pay 4 months half pay
During the fourth & fifth year of service	5 months full pay 5 months half pay
After five years' service	6 months full pay 6 months half pay

The Council have the discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional circumstances.

The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Date adopted
Review Date

