



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

2ND DECEMBER 2019

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Revised Domestic Abuse and Special Leave Policies

1. Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to introduce revised Domestic Abuse and Special Leave Policies that incorporate a provision of Safe Leave for staff members that are victims of domestic abuse.

2. Background:

The Council has a responsibility for the welfare of its employees and as such recognises that Gender based violence and Domestic Abuse may be a workplace issue.

The Council currently has a Domestic Abuse Policy in place that aims to:

- Support those employees experiencing Gender based violence and/or domestic abuse;
- Raise awareness of Gender based violence and Domestic Abuse and the implications for the services that the Council provides within the community and its effect within the workplace;
- Ensure that all Council employees understand the important role they can play in tackling Gender based violence and domestic abuse/violence and to develop a consistent approach across the Council.

3. Review of the Policy:

The Council's Corporate Policy Officer for Domestic Abuse and HR worked collaboratively to review the current policy arrangements. Good practice from other employers was identified in relation to a provision of safe leave in particular circumstances for victims of domestic abuse.

In line with the Council's responsibility for the welfare of its employee's, the introduction of a safe leave provision would provide assistance to employee's who are experiencing Gender Based Violence and Domestic Abuse and will promote that the Council will be supportive of the employee during this difficult time.

4. Proposed Changes:

The changes proposed to the Domestic Abuse and Special Leave Policies are for the provision of:

Up to 5 days paid safe leave to be available to employees experiencing gender based violence or domestic abuse for reasons including but not limited to:

- Seeking Safe Housing
- Visiting legal advisors or support agencies for re-housing,
- To make alternative childcare arrangements, including meetings with schools, or other relevant appointments.

The Special Leave Scheme and the Flexi-Time scheme also have provisions to allow additional or alternative leave.

In addition to the proposed safe leave provision, managers may also receive requests for time off work from employees who are experiencing Gender based violence or domestic abuse /violence to arrange appointments during the normal working day, these requests should be treated sympathetically in accordance with existing Council Policies. Such appointments might include:

- Attending Medical Appointments and Counselling
- Attending Legal Proceedings or receive legal advice
- To make alternative childcare arrangements, including meetings with schools.

5. Other support available:

Managers should also explore other measures supportively such as a temporary negotiated change in hours/times of work, where requested by employees experiencing Gender based violence or domestic abuse/violence (relevant Council Policies/schemes to be considered are: Rehabilitation Scheme, Reduced Hours Working, Flexible working, Term Time Working, Compressed Hours, Parental leave, Annual leave, Additional Annual Leave Purchase Scheme, Career Break, Emergency Time off for Dependants, unpaid leave)

6. Financial Impacts:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

7. Integrated impact assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment, attached at appendix 1 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

8. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

9. Workforce Impacts:

The changes will ensure employees are aware of the support available to them at a seriously difficult time for victims of domestic abuse and should be seen as a positive impact for the workforce.

10. Legal Impacts:

No implications.

11. Risk Management Impacts:

No implications.

12. Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. The proposed changes have been communicated with the Trade Unions via the Local Government Services Forum who were fully supportive of the proposed changes.

Communication of the changes will also be communicated to staff as part of the White Ribbon Campaign that aims to eliminate all forms of domestic violence. This will be communicated via the Council's Corporate Media Team.

13. Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the introduction of the revised Domestic Abuse and Special Leave Policies.

14. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 – Revised Domestic Abuse Policy
Appendix 3 – Revised Special Leave Policy.

15. List of background papers:

None.

16. Officer Contact

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