



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

7TH JUNE 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Introduction of Coronavirus Vaccine Policy

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to introduce a Coronavirus Vaccine Policy both to encourage employees to take up the vaccine and to provide information in relation to appointments and related matters.

2. Background

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obliges employers to take reasonable steps to reduce any workplace risks, this duty gives employers justification for encouraging their employees to be vaccinated to protect themselves and everyone else at the workplace.

Most employees will welcome the opportunity to be vaccinated against Coronavirus, but there will be a minority who will be reluctant or refuse to have the vaccine. The reasons could be many and varied, including individuals who can't have the vaccine (for example, on medical grounds),

those who can have the vaccine but refuse (for example, on religious or spiritual grounds) and those who can have it but have concerns and are uncertain (for example, due to a fear of vaccinations generally). While it is primarily the role of the government and health service to combat vaccine hesitancy, employers play a vital role in helping promote a persuasive case for Coronavirus vaccinations as they are gatekeepers for the health and safety of employees.

As the wider rollout of the vaccine is taking place, the Policy has been developed to encourage employees to be vaccinated. By engaging with employees and through good communication it is hoped this will help employees make informed decisions regarding their vaccination. Explaining and encouraging employees with impartial, factual information will keep them informed about the workplace impact and risks of Coronavirus.

It is acknowledged that this Policy will be reviewed and amended going forward as the public health information and guidance changes.

3. Development of the Policy

The Policy was developed taking into account best practice from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and ACAS. It has also been agreed by the trade unions in the Local Government Services Forum.

4. Communication of the Policy

As this is a new policy, it is important that it is communicated widely across the Council. We will do this by including an article in the Council's newsletter In The Loop and in the weekly staff sway. It will also be placed on the 'Coronavirus information for staff' internet pages and the HR Intranet. All Heads of Service will be emailed a link to the policy requesting them to cascade it to all their service areas and we will also advertise the policy on the payslips to ensure that all employees, whether they have an online payslip or a paper payslip, are aware of the new policy.

5. Financial Impacts:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

6. 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”.

7. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Implications

8. Workforce Impacts:

The introduction of this policy will have a positive impact on employees across our workforce as having the vaccine will provide them with added protection whilst at work or in our community.

9. Legal Impacts:

No implications.

10. Risk Management Impacts:

No implications.

11. Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. The Policy has been agreed with the Trade Unions via the Local Government Services Forum who were fully supportive of the introduction of this policy.

12. Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the introduction of the Coronavirus Vaccine Policy.

FOR DECISION

13. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Coronavirus Vaccine Policy

Appendix 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

14. List of background papers:

None.

15. Officer Contact

Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human Resources, Email: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk
or tel. 01639 763315.