



THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given of

THE MEETING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 7pm in The Harlington – Music Room

All members are summoned to attend

To Councillors: P. Einchcomb, L. Holt, E. May, R. Schofield, S. Tilley,
P. Wildsmith, G. Woods

Rita Tong, Executive Officer
5th November 2025

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 requires a record to be kept of members present, and that this record forms part of the minutes of the meeting. A resolution must be passed on whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Under the Local Authorities Localism Act 2011, members must declare any interest and the nature of that interest, which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting. Members are reminded that they must disclose both the existence and the nature of a personal interest that they have in any matter to be considered at this meeting. A personal interest will be considered a prejudicial interest if this is one in which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the members' judgement of the public interest.
3.	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 min per person maximum 15 minutes) To receive questions and statements from members of the public.
4.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To approve and sign as a correct record the main minutes and the confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 9 th July 2025 (<i>copies attached</i>).
Part 1 – ITEMS FOR DECISION	
5.	INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT – EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS The Internal Auditor has noted that, while all members of staff have signed contracts of employment, these contracts are inconsistent in their content and format. Some contain differing terms and conditions, while others omit reference to key employment provisions. The Auditor has recommended that the Council consider adopting the NALC Model Contract of Employment, which NALC advises has been developed in consultation with ACAS and reflects current best practice for local councils.

Inconsistent contractual terms can expose the Council to potential risks, including claims of **inequality of treatment or discrimination**, and can complicate the management of staff pay, leave, and other entitlements. It is therefore important that the Council has a consistent and lawful contractual framework for all employees.

Proposed Approach

The Executive Officer will:

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of all existing employment contracts and related policies, comparing them against both the NALC Model Employment Contract and the BrightHR contract, which is already used for new appointments.
2. Identify and address discrepancies or omissions to ensure that all staff are employed on consistent terms and conditions, or that any necessary exceptions are clearly documented and justified.
3. Consult individually with affected employees where required by law, in line with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and ACAS guidance on varying contractual terms.
4. Implement updated contracts where agreement is reached, ensuring all staff have an accurate written statement of employment particulars within one month of any change taking effect.
5. Report back to Council once the review and harmonisation process has been completed, confirming that all contracts have been standardised (or justified exceptions recorded).

Legal Context:

Employers may lawfully vary employment contracts where there is a legitimate business need and where proper consultation and written agreement are obtained. Any variation must be clearly explained, confirmed in writing, and compliant with statutory requirements. A consistent approach to employment terms supports equality, fairness, and sound governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the following:

- a) The findings of the Internal Auditor regarding inconsistencies in staff contracts.
- b) The Executive Officer's intention to review and harmonise all employment contracts, ensuring consistency with current best practice and existing Council policy.

6. TRADE UNION REFORMS

The *Employment Rights Bill* introduces the most significant update to UK employment law in decades. Trade union reforms will be the first to take effect, beginning after Royal Assent in late 2025, with further stages through to October 2026.

Key changes include:

- **Repeals and Removals (Oct 2025)**
 - The *Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023* and parts of the *Trade Union Act 2016* will be repealed.
 - This removes restrictions on strike ballots and facility time, creating a less regulated but potentially more collaborative industrial relations environment.
- **Union Recognition (Apr 2026)**
 - Threshold for recognition may drop from 10% to as low as 2% of employees, meaning even small groups could trigger formal recognition procedures.
- **Industrial Action (Apr 2026)**
 - Unions will be allowed to use electronic and on-site ballots.
 - Strike mandates will no longer expire after six months.
 - Dismissal protection for striking employees will be strengthened.
- **Workplace and Digital Access (Oct 2026)**
 - Unions will gain legal rights to access physical workplaces and digital channels (such as email lists and online meetings) for member engagement.
- **Fair Work Agency (Apr 2026)**
 - A new statutory body to issue guidance, mediate disputes, and enforce compliance with union access and recognition rules.

	• New Employer Duties (Oct 2026) – Employers must provide all new starters with written information about their right to join a union. – They must negotiate and publicise workplace and digital access arrangements. – There is an enhanced duty to protect union members from detriment related to union activity. RECOMMENDATIONS That members note the upcoming legislative changes and agree that the Executive Officer: a) Monitors further government and Fair Work Agency guidance as it is issued. b) Reviews current employment policies and contracts for references to union rights, access, and industrial action.
7.	EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS BILL To consider a report on the impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the Council. RECOMMENDATIONS That members note the report and agree any actions arising.
8.	WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY To consider the revised Whistleblowing Policy (<i>Copy attached</i>) RECOMMENDATION To approve the revised Whistleblowing Policy.
9.	BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY To consider the revised Bullying and Harassment Policy (<i>Copy attached</i>) RECOMMENDATION To approve the revised Bullying and Harassment Policy.
10.	GRIEVANCE POLICY To consider the revised Grievance Policy (<i>Copy attached</i>) RECOMMENDATION To approve the revised Grievance Policy.
Part 2 – ITEMS TO NOTE	
11.	TRAINING UPDATE Members to note training received by Officers since the last Establishment Committee meeting.
12.	STAFF APPRAISALS All staff appraisals for 2024/25 have now been completed.
13.	STAFFING UPDATES Members to note staffing updates since the previous Establishment Committee meeting.
14.	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting of the Establishment Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 7pm in The Harlington (Music Room).
Part 3 – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR DECISION	
	Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press will be excluded from the Meeting. The following types of business will be treated as confidential:

	a. Matters relating to individual staff, engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees b. Terms of tenders, and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts c. Receipt of professional legal advice and preparation of cases in legal proceedings d. The early stages of any dispute e. Matters of a commercial nature
15.	STAFF SALARY BUDGET FOR 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR To receive the impact of draft payroll scenarios on next year's budget and to agree the recommended salary budget for inclusion in next year's budget (see report attached). RECOMMENDATION To make a recommendation to Council regarding the staff salaries budget for next financial year



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held on

Wednesday 9th July 2025 at 7pm

* Councillor Woods (Chairman)

0 Councillor Tilley (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb

* Councillor Holt

* Councillor May

* Councillor Schofield

Councillor Wildsmith

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 1

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Woods was nominated and seconded for the position of Chairman of the Committee. There were no other nominations received.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Woods be elected as Chairman of the Establishment Committee for the local government year 2025/2026.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 2

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Tilley was nominated and seconded for the position of Vice Chairman of the Committee. There were no other nominations received.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Tilley be elected as Vice Chairman of the Establishment Committee for the local government year 2025/2026.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 3

APOLOGIES

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 4

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 5

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 6**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Establishment Committee meeting held on 12th March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 7**ANCELLS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Members noted that the Administration Support Officer had taken over the management of bookings at Ancells Farm Community Centre following the retirement of the Ancells Supervisor. This has involved transitioning regular hirers to the new booking system, managing casual bookings, and supporting all hirers in using the new remote locking system. A number of residual issues also required investigation and resolution, all of which the Administration Support Officer has successfully addressed.

To recognise the additional responsibilities undertaken, Members agreed to award the Administration Support Officer a one-off bonus.

It is intended that responsibility for bookings at Ancells Farm Community Centre will return to the General Manager's team once the Marketing & Box Office Manager resumes full-time hours and workloads covering her absence reduce. The Marketing & Box Office Manager is due to return to full-time hours on 24 July 2025.

RESOLVED

- a) Members noted the temporary and longer-term arrangements for managing bookings at Ancells Farm Community Centre.
- b) Members approved a one-off bonus for the Administration Support Officer.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 8**NEONATAL CARE LEAVE PROCEDURE**

Members considered the revised Neonatal Care Leave procedure.

RESOLVED

To approve the revised Neonatal Care Leave procedure

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 9**TRAINING UPDATE**

Members noted the training received by Officers since the last Establishment Committee meeting.

Members expressed concern that some mandatory training has remained outstanding for several months, which is considered unacceptable. All outstanding training must be completed by 31 August 2025, and any staff who fail to meet this deadline may be subject to formal warnings. All affected staff are to be notified of this requirement without delay.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 10**STAFF APPRAISALS**

Members noted that a new appraisal form has been developed and is being used for the 2024/25 review period. Cllr Holt observed that there was no specific section for recording career aspirations. The Executive Officer explained that while this is partly addressed within the training section, it can also be captured in the summary comments if needed.

The appraisal process for 2024/25 is now underway. Members requested that all appraisals be completed by 31 August 2025.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 11

STAFFING UPDATES

Members noted staffing updates since the previous Establishment Committee meeting

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 12

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Establishment Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 7pm in The Harlington (Music Room).

Part 3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Chairman stated the reasons that the remainder of the meeting should be held in confidential session is due to matters relating to individual staff and terms of service being discussed.

RESOLVED

That subject to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press will be excluded from the Meeting.

EST JULY 2025 ITEM 13

REVIEW OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Members received a report in response to a request to review the Council's disciplinary process, following concerns raised by a member of staff.

RESOLVED

The following actions were agreed to improve the clarity, fairness, and transparency of the disciplinary process:

- The complaints procedure will be used where appropriate.
- Neutral language will be used in investigation reports and other staff-related documentation.
- Mitigating factors will be documented wherever possible.
- A standard statement will be included in investigation notifications, clarifying that HR records may be accessed where relevant, but only to the extent necessary to address the matter.
- Staff will be permitted to bring a support person to investigation meetings.
- The Executive Officer is authorised to respond to the staff member, once the Chairman has approved the draft response.

Signed: **Date**.....
Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.16pm.

7. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS BILL

1. PURPOSE

To advise Members on the major reforms introduced by the Employment Rights Bill, to highlight those changes that will become employer obligations (or give employees new rights) in the near term, and to identify the actions the Council must take to be ready.

2. BACKGROUND

The Employment Rights Bill was introduced on 10 October 2024 and represents a major overhaul of employment law in the UK, as part of the Government's "Plan to Make Work Pay".

Its aim is to modernise workers' rights, strengthen job security, expand family-friendly rights, and update employer obligations.

The Bill is still subject to regulations and implementation dates, so many of the detailed provisions (secondary legislation) are still pending.

3. KEY CHANGES RELEVANT TO THE COUNCIL

Below are the principal changes that will affect our responsibilities as an employer, grouped by topic. Note that many of these become effective in phases (2026 and beyond) so we should monitor rollout and ensure readiness.

3.1 Day-one rights to leave and other service-qualifying rights

- The Bill removes the minimum service requirement for **statutory paternity leave** so that an employee will become eligible from day one of employment (rather than after 26 weeks' service).
- The Bill removes the minimum service requirement for **statutory unpaid parental leave** (currently one-year service) so that employees can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave per child from day one.
- The Bill introduces a new right to **bereavement leave** from day one (for employees suffering the death of a dependent/close relation, to be defined).
- Under the Bill, employees will be eligible for **statutory sick pay (SSP)** from day one of absence, and the lower earnings limit will be removed.
- The right to request **flexible working** is currently a day-one right to request. The Bill proposes stronger protection by making any refusal subject to a requirement of reasonableness.
- The Bill proposes to make protection from **unfair dismissal** (i.e., removal or shortening of the two-year qualifying period) a day-one right.

3.2 Flexible working

- The Bill retains the eight business reasons for refusing a flexible-working request but adds a statutory requirement that any refusal must be *reasonable*. The employer must give written reasons for refusal.
- These changes are likely to take effect around 2027 (consultations in 2025/26).

3.3 Unfair dismissal and service thresholds

- Currently employees need two years' continuous service to bring a claim for unfair dismissal. The Bill proposes to remove or reduce that threshold (to day one) and introduce a statutory probation period during which a lighter procedure might apply.
- The roadmap indicates day-one protection for unfair dismissal will not take effect until 2027.

3.4 Parental leave, paternity leave and bereavement leave

- As above: parental and paternity leave become day-one rights. Employers must review their policies and procedures accordingly.
- The Bill extends bereavement leave rights (for example to pregnancy loss before 24 weeks) and widens eligible relationships.

3.5 Other relevant changes to employer obligations

- The Bill abolishes the lower earnings limit for SSP and removes the waiting period. Employers will need to administer SSP from day one for certain employees.
- The Bill introduces a new enforcement body, the Fair Work Agency, and strengthens compliance and inspection regimes.
- The Bill proposes changes to the rules on redundancy consultation thresholds (e.g., 20 or more dismissals across connected establishments) and “fire and re-hire” practices.

4. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- Most of the family-friendly leave changes (day-one paternity/parental/bereavement leave) and SSP reforms are expected to take effect **April 2026**.
- The day-one unfair dismissal protection is expected in **2027**.
- Flexible-working rights (reasonable refusals) also likely in 2027.
- Secondary legislation still to be finalised — so some detail (e.g., definitions of “close relationship” for bereavement leave, probation period rules) remains uncertain.

5. WHAT WE AS THE COUNCIL MUST DO (IMMEDIATE / NEAR-TERM ACTIONS)

To ensure we are compliant and prepared, the following steps are recommended:

5.1 Review and update policies

- Review our existing parental leave, paternity leave, and bereavement leave policies to reflect forthcoming day-one rights.
- Update our flexible-working request policy and refusal process to reflect the upcoming “reasonableness” requirement.
- Review our unfair dismissal/termination policies, including probationary period arrangements and dismissal procedures.
- Review SSP eligibility and payroll systems in light of removal of waiting period and lower earnings limit.

5.2 Communications and internal awareness

- Develop a communication plan for employees to explain upcoming changes, what rights they will have, and how the Council will manage requests.
- Train managers and Members on the new frameworks, particularly flexible working refusals, leave administration and dismissal/probation procedures.

5.3 Systems and administration

- Check payroll and HR systems to ensure capability to handle SSP from day one and for parental/paternity leave from day one.
- Update HR documentation, contract templates, and staff handbooks to reflect policy changes.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the significant forthcoming changes under the Employment Rights Bill and agree the direction of the Council’s preparatory work (as outlined above).

Overview

The Plan to Make Work Pay, developed through close collaboration with business and trade unions, is a manifesto commitment and a core part of one of the Government's five mission-led priorities to grow the economy. The plan is designed to help more people to stay in work, support workers' productivity and improve living standards. One of the first significant delivery vehicles for this plan is the Employment Rights Bill. Once implemented, the Bill will represent the biggest upgrade in employment rights for a generation.

What measures are contained within the Bill?

It will address **one-sided flexibility**, ensuring that jobs provide a baseline of security for workers:

- End exploitative **zero hours contracts** by introducing rights to guaranteed hours, reasonable notice of shifts, and payments for short-notice cancellation of shifts, with corresponding rights for agency workers.
- End unscrupulous '**fire and rehire**' and '**fire and replace**' practices by considering dismissals for failing to agree to a change in contract as automatically unfair, except where businesses genuinely have no alternative.
- Remove the two-year qualifying period of employment for the right to claim **unfair dismissal**, making it a day-one right, while simultaneously enabling employers to ensure the employee is a good fit for the job by establishing a new statutory probation period.
- Strengthen **collective redundancy rights** by ensuring obligations to consult and notify apply when: (a) employers propose 20 or more redundancies at one establishment or; (b) employers propose an amount of redundancies which meets a new threshold to be established in secondary legislation.
- Close the **maritime redundancy notification loophole**, ensuring that operators providing regular services to British ports cannot avoid the collective redundancy notification requirement.

It will ensure **workers get fair pay** for a fair day's work:

- **Strengthen Statutory Sick Pay** by removing the Lower Earnings Limit and removing the waiting period.
- Re-instate the **School Support Staff Negotiating Body** to improve pay and conditions for school support staff in England.
- Provide for the establishment of a **Fair Pay Agreements** process in the adult social care sector in England and social care sectors in Scotland and Wales.
- Strengthen existing **tipping law** by requiring employers to consult with workers when developing or revising their tipping policies.
- Re-introduce the **two-tier code** on workforce matters ensuring that employees from the private sector working on outsourced contracts will be offered terms and conditions broadly comparable to those transferred from the public sector.
- Allow for the creation of a **mandatory Seafarers' Charter**, to protect the working conditions of seafarers aboard ships operating regular services from UK ports.
- Provide powers to maintain compliance with international law by staying up to date with **international maritime conventions**.

The Bill will support **family friendly rights** by improving flexibility and security:

- Make existing entitlements to **Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental leave** available from 'Day 1' of employment.
- Enable parents to take their paternity leave and pay after their shared parental leave and pay.
- Introduce a new right to unpaid **bereavement leave**, allowing employees to take leave from work to grieve the loss of a loved one.
- Introduce new **protections against dismissal for pregnant women**, mothers on maternity leave, and mothers who return to work for a six-month period after they return to work.
- Strengthen the existing 'day-one' right to request **flexible working**, by requiring employers to explain the grounds on which they've denied a request and adding the requirement that a rejection of a request be reasonable.

The Bill will prioritise **fairness, equality and wellbeing of workers**:

- Strengthen the duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to **prevent sexual harassment** of their employees by requiring them to take 'all reasonable steps'.
- Introduce an obligation on employers to not permit **harassment of their employees by third parties**.
- Introduce a power to enable regulations to specify steps which are to be regarded as 'reasonable' for an employer to take in order to prevent sexual harassment.
- Strengthen protections for **whistleblowers**, by making it explicit that sexual harassment can be the basis for a protected disclosure.
- Motivate employers to **improve gender equality** by requiring relevant employers to produce action plans, setting out how they are addressing the gender pay gap issues and supporting employees going through the menopause.

The Bill will **modernise trade union legislation** giving trade unions greater freedom to organise, represent and negotiate on behalf of their workers:

- Repeal the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- Repeal the great majority of the Trade Union Act 2016 and bring in a 12-month mandate and 10 day notice period for industrial action.
- Strengthen trade unions' right of access, including providing for digital access.
- Simplify trade union recognition process, including providing better access arrangements for unions and dealing more effectively with unfair practices.
- Introduce new rights and protections for trade unions representatives.
- Introduce a duty for employers to inform workers of their right to join a trade union.
- Broaden the scope of blacklisting protections which may be made in regulations.
- Simplify the information required for industrial action notices.
- Provide protection from detriment on the grounds of industrial action.

Finally, the Bill will improve **enforcement** of employment rights:

- Establish the **Fair Work Agency**, which will bring together the enforcement of domestic agency rules, the National Minimum Wage, licensing of gangmasters, and action against serious labour exploitation. It will also take on additional functions such as the enforcement of holiday pay. Its' new powers will allow it to investigate, inspect and take action against businesses that are flouting the law. These include powers to investigate a wider range of cases of labour abuse, issue penalties, and bring cases to the employment tribunal on the behalf of workers.
- **Increase the time limit** within which employees are able to make an Employment Tribunal claim from 3 months to 6 months.
- Bring **umbrella companies** (payment intermediaries) within scope of the Employment Agencies Act 1973, allowing for their regulation and state enforcement.

Common questions

When will businesses be required to make these changes?

- As is typical for employment legislation, further detail on many policies in the Bill will be provided through regulations, and in some cases codes of practice, after Royal Assent.
- We expect to begin consulting on the majority of these reforms this year, seeking significant input from stakeholders.
- Adjusting to these new reforms will take time and we are committed to ensuring all stakeholders receive appropriate time to prepare for these changes.
- We expect that most reforms in the Bill will take effect no earlier than 2026. Where more time is needed for businesses to prepare for change, this will be taken into consideration. We will also publish guidance where this is appropriate.

How have stakeholders been engaged in the development of policy?

- The Government is undertaking an extensive programme of engagement around the Employment Rights Bill and broader Plan to Make Work Pay. This has been underpinned by a strong commitment to working in partnership with businesses and trade unions to ensure policy is firmly pro-business and pro-worker. The engagement approach has received praise from business and trade unions alike. It will continue throughout and beyond the passage of the Employment Rights Bill.
- Following introduction of the Bill, the Government ran four consultations: applying zero hours contracts measures to agency workers; strengthening remedies against abuse of rules on collective redundancy and fire and rehire; creating a modern framework for industrial relations; and strengthening Statutory Sick Pay. Responses to these initial conversations can be found online at www.gov.uk/government/collections/make-work-pay.

What role do delegated powers play in the Bill?

- The Bill contains a number of delegated powers. Given the large size of the Bill and the breadth of its subject matter, as well as the existing precedents for use of delegated powers in employment law, the Department believes these are necessary and justified. They will enable the Government to remain responsive to the changing needs of the modern labour market and economy, and to ensure the employment rights framework remains relevant to these needs.

Is it true that the reforms in this Bill will cost business £5bn?

- Impact Assessments across the Bill and individual measures are available online at www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-rights-bill-impact-assessments.
- These are based on the best available evidence and consultation with external experts and stakeholders, including academics and thinktanks.
- The £5bn figure from our Impact Assessment is a top-end estimate of the costs - which will largely represent a transfer to the lowest paid in society - with the bottom end of the range close to £1bn. The costs therefore are likely to be under 0.4% of our national wage Bill and could even be as low as 0.1%.
- Improving worker wellbeing, increasing productivity, reducing workplace conflict, and creating a more level playing field for good employers would grant significant benefits worth billions of pounds per year. That is why delivering the benefits of this Bill would offset the costs.



UK Government

Implementing the Employment Rights Bill

Our roadmap for delivering change

July 2025



gov.uk/makeworkpay

Ministerial foreword

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade

This Government was elected on a pledge to rebuild our economy so that it serves working people once again. That means delivering on our Plan for Change.

We promised that we would introduce legislation to Make Work Pay within our first 100 days in office. We kept that promise. And thanks to our Employment Rights Bill, millions of workers will benefit from greater fairness and security at work. Our reforms will also strengthen the voices of people in the workplace.

Measures such as a ban on exploitative zero hours contracts, the end of unscrupulous fire and rehire practices, parental leave and protections from unfair dismissal from day one will be truly transformative for many.

Up to 1.3 million working people – some of the country's lowest-paid employees – will get access to Statutory Sick Pay for the very first time.

This is on top of the large pay rise that over three million people received in April through increases in the National Living Wage, worth an extra £1,400 per year for an eligible full-time worker, and the National Minimum Wage.

As a result, businesses of all sizes who are already doing the right thing will no longer be undercut by those who don't, raising the bar all round. All of which adds up to not just a new deal for working people, but also for business.

We are proud of these reforms. We are proud of the opportunities they will afford working people and working families. We are proud to strengthen workers' voices in the workplace. That is why we are so determined to implement these reforms as swiftly as possible: we are working with, not against, business to make them a success.

Taken together, these measures will deliver tangible benefits to working people across the country, and our timeline demonstrates our determination to go further and faster to raise living standards and put more money in people's pockets.

We are grateful to the businesses, trade unions, civil society groups and Parliamentarians who have got us this far and worked to make our reforms as strong and effective as possible.

We always said that this Bill must work in practice, not just on paper. This is why we are consulting on key aspects of our Plan to Make Work Pay and taking a staggered approach to implementing several of the most significant reforms.

This is the right thing to do for both employers and workers. We are ensuring that there is a proper business readiness period so that businesses and organisations fully understand the details of our reforms and can prepare long before they come into force.

This means that key measures such as reforms to Statutory Sick Pay, simplifying the trade union recognition process, and day one paternity leave and unpaid parental leave will come into effect in April 2026.

It means that banning unscrupulous fire and rehire practices, the strengthening of trade unions' right of access and employment tribunal time limits will take effect in October 2026.

And it means that undertakings for employers such as gender pay gap action plans, banning exploitative zero hours contracts, and changes to unfair dismissal will happen in 2027.

This makes sense for both businesses and workers.

This is how we will deliver a new deal for working people – fixing our broken labour market and tackling poor pay, poor working conditions and poor job security so that people across the country feel the benefits.

Section 1: Introduction



Introduction

1. The Plan to Make Work Pay is the Government's ambitious package of reforms that will upgrade our employment rights framework, ensuring it is fit for a modern economy, empowers working people and contributes to economic growth. Make Work Pay will support the delivery of the Government's Plan for Change by tackling the low pay, poor working conditions and poor job security that have been holding the UK economy back. Our Employment Rights Bill is a crucial step in delivering these reforms.
2. We recognise how keen people are to feel change in their working lives. But in order for these reforms to have the impact we need, it is crucial that they work for workers and businesses of all sizes, and in all sectors.
3. We have always said that we would engage and consult comprehensively on the implementation of the measures in the Employment Rights Bill to make sure these changes work for all. This means that, while the Employment Rights Bill sets out the policy clearly in primary legislation, key details of how many of the individual measures will work in practice will be consulted on, agreed and then set out in secondary legislation and regulations.
4. We are working at pace to deliver on our commitment to Make Work Pay, engaging and consulting early to make sure we get the detail right as part of our Plan for Change.
5. Our *Employment Rights Bill Implementation Roadmap* provides clarity for workers and businesses on how and when Government will engage and consult on those details. It also lays out our anticipated commencement dates for different parts of the Bill – providing clarity on when we expect to see the changes take place on the ground. Employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders should, and will, get a proper amount of time to prepare for the Make Work Pay reforms while ensuring we deliver tangible, and much needed, benefits to working people at pace. Our implementation plan will allow employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to plan ahead to ensure that they can prepare for these important reforms.

Section 2: Preparing for the implementation of the Employment Rights Bill



Preparing for the implementation of the Employment Rights Bill

6. The Employment Rights Bill is a critical step towards delivering our Plan to Make Work Pay.
7. Some measures will take effect shortly following Royal Assent of the Bill. These include:
 - Repealing most of the Trade Union Act 2016 and the Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Act 2023
 - Protections against dismissal for taking industrial action
8. As is typical with changes to employment legislation, the Bill will give the Government a series of powers in primary legislation which can then be used to define the detailed policy in secondary legislation or regulations, supported by Codes of Practice and guidance. To develop this policy, we may need to consult and, in some cases, amend, revoke or draft new Codes of Practice. Others, such as Acas, will also need to consult on Codes of Practice, where amendments or new Codes, may be required.
9. Our implementation roadmap sets out many of the most important steps before our measures can take effect. In developing our roadmap we have considered:
10. **Consultation** – We will make sure implementation works for employers, workers, trade unions, and other stakeholders: Government will need to ensure that employers (including public sector employers) and trade unions are able to carry out the changes that the new legislation will require. To make sure our legislation achieves these aims, we may need to consult to determine the most effective way we can bring about our intended changes in the workplace. These policy interventions must work for all in order to deliver these changes across the country. In addition, Government wants to continue to hear employer perspectives on how these changes will affect existing systems and processes, and the steps employers will need to take to adapt to these reforms. We greatly value the expertise and insights already shared through our ongoing engagement on our Plan. The same is true for trade unions, workers and other stakeholders. Much of the Plan to Make Work Pay will affect the way that trade unions operate within and alongside the workplace. By

engaging closely with our stakeholders, we will ensure our changes work for all.

11. **Guidance** – We will produce guidance to support employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders, and make sure people have time to familiarise themselves with it: Government is committed to supporting employers, workers, and unions to adapt to the Make Work Pay reforms. In many instances, alongside legislation, we will ensure there is guidance available to clarify new requirements and help users to support compliance. Guidance and Statutory Codes of Practice may be developed by Government, by delivery partners like Acas, or in collaboration with other organisations. Guidance takes time to prepare and may be accompanied by further consultation. Employment tribunals may have regard to guidance when making decisions and so it is important to get it right. Having developed guidance and/or Codes of Practice, Government will allow time for employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the changes. We will ensure this time is built into our implementation plans.
12. **Support** – We will make sure Acas and other delivery partners have time to prepare: Acas, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, is a public body that works with millions of employers and employees every year to improve employment relations. We are closely engaging Acas, and others, on the support they provide to employers and workers. Acas provides extensive supportive functions beyond the production of guidance and statutory codes, such as their helpline for employers and workers to understand their rights at work, an early conciliation service which is offered to all parties with potential employment tribunal claims, a collective conciliation service in disputes between employers and trade unions, and training for employers and managers. We will build time and resource into our planning to ensure they are able to continue with this support once our measures are implemented.
13. **Time to prepare** – We will ensure employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders have the time and space needed for systems change; preparation goes beyond ‘familiarisation’. We know that some employers, particularly small and micro businesses/enterprises, may need additional, tailored support in order to adapt to changes. Many employers will need to amend their existing systems, including IT and payroll, to accommodate the new reforms. Before reforms come into effect, we will

provide sufficient time to allow stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the new requirements and expectations, and then take forward the relevant changes within their organisations. Government will consider options and timings in advance, to allow employers and trade unions time to plan.

14. **Enforcement** – We are committed to ensuring the enforcement landscape has the necessary capacity and capability to uphold the new requirements. This will include support for Acas, the employment tribunal system and the new Fair Work Agency.
15. The expert and detailed insights and feedback gained from employers, trade unions, representative organisations, civil society, and other stakeholders to-date have been invaluable in developing proportionate and effective policy, helping us get this critical piece of legislation right. Government is greatly appreciative of the constructive way in which stakeholders have engaged so far, and look forward to ongoing collaboration as we implement this groundbreaking package of measures.

Section 3: Taking a phased approach



Taking a phased approach

16. The Employment Rights Bill contains a significant number of policy measures, affecting different parts of the employment law framework and beyond. We want employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to have the time and space to work through the detail of each key measure with us. As we set out in our *Next Steps to Make Work Pay*, Government will take a phased approach to engagement and consultation on these policy measures, as well as phasing commencement.
17. Phasing consultation will allow employers from all sectors, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to fully engage with the complex policy issues at hand and will ensure Government is appropriately considering the most effective way forward.
18. Phasing commencement will mean stakeholders will be able to plan their time and resources to make sure they are ready when the changes come in.
19. By engaging and consulting on the key measures from Summer 2025, Government will maintain the pace of delivery. This will mean stakeholders have earlier clarity around reforms, and Government will be able to deliver on the benefits of the Plan to Make Work Pay for employees and employers across the country.

Phasing consultation

20. For many measures, Government will consult on the detail of policy and implementation. Our aim is to sequence consultations in a way that enables partners to engage meaningfully. Consultations will be accompanied by opportunities for direct engagement with Government.
21. **Summer/ Autumn 2025** – the measures we will consult on include:
 - Reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)
 - Fair Pay Agreement for the Adult Social Care sector
 - Giving employees protection from unfair dismissal from 'day 1', including on the dismissal process in the statutory probation period

22. **Autumn 2025** – the measures we will consult on include:

- A package of trade union measures including electronic balloting and workplace balloting; simplifying trade union recognition processes; duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union; and, right of access. New rights and protections for trade union representatives will be covered by an Acas Code of Practice consultation.
- Fire and rehire
- Regulation of umbrella companies
- Bereavement leave
- Rights for pregnant workers
- Ending the exploitative use of Zero Hours Contracts (ZHCs)

23. **Winter/ early 2026** – the measures we will consult on include:

- A package of trade union measures including protection against detriments for taking industrial action and, blacklisting.
- Tightening tipping law
- Collective redundancy
- Flexible working

24. **Finalising policy** – Engagement and consultation will inform policy development. Following consultation, Government will develop final policy positions to deliver our measures. In some instances, this will be regulations, in others it will be guidance or Codes of Practice by the Government or others such as Acas. Some measures may require more than one round of consultation, especially if there is a need to update or develop a Code of Practice. Commencement timings will be informed by the insights from consultation and engagement. Government will ensure employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders are given time to prepare for change.

Phasing when measures take effect

25. Policy measures will take effect in phases. Common commencement dates will be used to commence the majority of regulations laid using the powers provided for in the Bill (6th April and 1st October).
26. In our consultations we will seek to further understand impacts related to commencement.
27. This package represents the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation. This timeline is our pathway to putting fairness back in the workplace, delivering tangible benefits to working people at pace.
28. We have set out below our initial view of the point at which some of the key policy areas will take effect:
29. Measures that will take effect **at Royal Assent or soon afterwards** include:
- Repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
 - Repeal of the great majority of the Trade Union Act 2016 (some provisions will be repealed via commencement order at a later date)
 - Removing the 10 year ballot requirement for trade union political funds
 - Simplifying industrial action notices and industrial action ballot notices
 - Protections against dismissal for taking industrial action
30. Measures that will take effect **in April 2026** include:
- Collective redundancy protective award – doubling the maximum period of the protective award
 - 'Day 1' Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave
 - Whistleblowing protections
 - Fair Work Agency body established
 - Statutory Sick Pay – remove the Lower Earnings Limit and waiting period
 - Simplifying trade union recognition process
- Electronic and workplace balloting
31. Measures that will take effect **in October 2026** include:
- Fire and rehire
 - Bringing forward regulations to establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body
 - Procurement - two-tier code
 - Tightening tipping law
 - Duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
 - Strengthen trade unions' right of access
 - Requiring employers to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of their employees
 - Introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties
 - New rights and protections for trade union reps
 - Employment tribunal time limits
 - Extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action
32. Commencement of the Mandatory Seafarers Charter is expected to be in December 2026.
33. Measures that will take effect **in 2027** include:
- Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (introduced on a voluntary basis in April 2026)
 - Rights for pregnant workers
 - Introducing a power to enable regulations to specify steps that are to be regarded as "reasonable", to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
 - Blacklisting
 - Industrial relations framework
 - Regulation of umbrella companies

-
- Collective redundancy – collective consultation threshold
 - Flexible working
 - Bereavement leave
 - Ending the exploitative use of ZHCs and applying ZHC measures to agency workers
 - ‘Day 1’ right – protection from unfair dismissal
34. Implementation of the gender pay gap outsourcing measure will be dependent on timelines for broader changes to pay gap reporting, including related measures in the draft Equality (Race & Disability) Bill.
35. We will provide more detail on these policies and our timelines for implementation following consultation, with a clear commitment that we aim to work at pace to deliver these tangible benefits to millions of working people.
36. Delivery of the Plan to Make Work Pay is a manifesto commitment and whilst the Employment Rights Bill will play a vital role in delivering our Make Work Pay commitments, others will be delivered through alternative routes as set out in our *Next Steps to Make Work Pay*. Again, the Government will continue to work with trade unions and business, consulting fully on how best to implement these measures.
37. Government will deliver on our Plan for Change by ensuring employment rights are fit for a modern economy, empowering working people and contributing to economic growth.

Department for Business and Trade

The UK's Department for Business and Trade is an economic growth department. We ensure fair, competitive markets at home, secure access to new markets abroad and support businesses to invest, export and grow. Our priorities are the Industrial Strategy, Make Work Pay, the Trade Strategy and the Plan for Small Business.

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Employment Rights Bill: family-friendly provisions

October 28, 2024

As part of our series of updates exploring the implications of the Employment Rights Bill (the **Bill**), we consider the changes to the flexible working regime, bereavement leave, paternity leave, parental leave, and pregnancy and statutory family leave protection.

Flexible working

The Bill will make flexible working the default from day one of employment. Employers will only be able to refuse a request on one of the prescribed grounds and, as a new requirement, if it is reasonable for it to do so.

The specified grounds are similar to the existing grounds for refusing a flexible working request:

- burden of additional costs;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- inability to recruit additional staff;
- detrimental impact on quality;
- detrimental impact on performance;
- insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- planned structural changes; and
- any other grounds specified by the Secretary of State in regulations.

Employers will have to explain to the employee in writing the ground or grounds for refusing the application and explain why they think that refusal is reasonable.

To prepare for this change, carrying out an audit may assist in identifying where flexibility already exists and help you to identify barriers to flexible working in particular roles.

Bereavement leave

The Bill proposes to extend bereavement leave to a wider group of employees by adapting the current Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave regime. At present, this leave is only available to parents who lose a child under 18 or

experience a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. The Bill will broaden eligibility to cover a wider group of individuals who suffer a loss. The specific relationships that will qualify for the extended bereavement leave will be set out in secondary legislation. Those who have lost a child will remain entitled to two weeks' leave but the entitlement will be one week (in respect of each deceased person) in other cases. Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave attracts pay at the same statutory rate as paternity pay, but it appears from the way the Bill is drafted, and the explanatory notes accompanying it, that the wider bereavement leave entitlement will be unpaid.

Paternity leave

Under existing law, employees must have completed 26 weeks' continuous service before they are eligible for statutory paternity leave. This leave allows fathers, or the mother's partner, to take time off to support their family following the birth or adoption of a child.

The Bill will make eligibility for paternity leave a day one right, meaning there will no longer be a requirement for a qualifying period of employment. Employees will also have the flexibility to take paternity leave after taking shared parental leave, offering more choice in how families manage their time off.

Parental leave

The Bill introduces a significant change to statutory parental leave, which currently requires employees to have completed one year of continuous service. The new legislation makes parental leave a day one right, allowing employees immediate access to up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave per child up to the child's 18th birthday.

Maternity and statutory family leave protection

The Bill takes steps to strengthen protections for pregnant employees and those on or returning from maternity and statutory family leave. Under existing legislation, pregnant employees and those on maternity leave (and other statutory family leave) have a degree of protection from dismissal on the grounds of redundancy. This protection does not amount to a bar on dismissing employees who are pregnant, or on family leave; instead, they have a priority right to a suitable alternative vacancy, where one exists.

The government plans to expand this protection, although this will be done through secondary legislation. The Next Steps paper that accompanied the Bill indicates the government proposes to make it unlawful to dismiss pregnant employees or those returning from maternity or other statutory family leave within six months of their return, except in specific limited circumstances.

Summary

The table below provides a comparison of the current position and the position under the Bill.

Family-friendly provision	Current position	Position under the Bill
Flexible working	Employees have the right to request flexible working from day one of employment. Employers can refuse requests on business grounds and must respond within two months.	Flexible working as the default by requiring an employer's refusal of a request for one of the statutory reasons to be reasonable.

Family-friendly provision	Current position	Position under the Bill
Bereavement leave	Statutory parental bereavement leave entitles eligible parents (those who lose a child under 18 or suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks) to two weeks' paid leave. This is a day one right, although employees must have 26 weeks' service to be eligible for statutory parental bereavement pay.	One week's unpaid bereavement leave will be available to all employees. The government will set out the relationships covered in secondary legislation. Parents will still be eligible for two weeks' paid leave if a child under 18 dies.
Paternity leave	Employees must have 26 weeks' continuous service to qualify for paternity leave and cannot take paternity leave after a period of shared parental leave.	Employees will be eligible for statutory paternity leave from day one of employment and will be able to take paternity leave after taking shared parental leave.
Parental leave	Statutory parental leave is available after one year's service, allowing up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child up to their 18th birthday.	Employees will be eligible for statutory parental leave from day one of employment.
Maternity and statutory family leave protection	Pregnant workers and those on maternity leave (or other statutory family leave) have priority rights to a suitable alternative vacancy in a redundancy situation. This priority right also applies after return from statutory family leave.	Subject to secondary legislation, it will be unlawful to dismiss employees during pregnancy and within six months of their return from statutory family leave.

Timing and secondary legislation

The government has indicated that most of the reforms will not take effect before 2026. It must bring forward secondary legislation to implement its plans in relation to dismissal protection for pregnant employees and those on or returning from statutory family leave.

In due course, it will be important to ensure that you train managers, so they are aware of these new provisions. The move to make flexible working the default will require advance planning – as recommended above, an audit of existing flexibility and barriers is a good place to start.

You can read our overview of all the key measures in the Bill [here](#).

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Whistleblowing Policy

Full Council Approved: February 2018
Last Reviewed: October 2025
Due for Review: October 2028

Policy Elements (Principles and Scope)

1. Policy Statement

Fleet Town Council is committed to the highest standards of openness, accountability, and integrity. The Council takes malpractice seriously and encourages all workers to report genuine concerns in the public interest. This policy provides a framework for raising and investigating whistleblowing concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all workers, including:

- Employees
- Temporary staff
- Agency staff
- Contractors and suppliers of services

Volunteers, contractors, and suppliers may make disclosures under this policy, but are not considered workers under employment legislation and therefore do not have statutory protection.

3. Key Definitions

- **Whistleblowing:** Raising a concern in the public interest about danger, illegality, or malpractice affecting others, such as members of the public.
- **Protected Disclosure:** A disclosure that meets the following criteria:
 1. It is in the public interest (affects others).
 2. The worker reasonably believes it tends to show past, present, or likely future wrongdoing in one of the following categories:
 - Criminal offences (including fraud)
 - Failure to comply with a legal obligation
 - Miscarriages of justice

- Endangering health and safety
- Environmental damage
- Covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

Where both criteria are met, workers are protected from detrimental treatment under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996 and amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

4. Policy Outcomes

This policy aims to:

- Provide a safe mechanism for raising genuine concerns
- Ensure concerns are investigated promptly, thoroughly, and effectively
- Enable appropriate sharing of critical information
- Protect workers who raise concerns from victimisation
- Ensure proportional and serious consideration of concerns
- Comply with legal obligations
- Maintain trust, confidence, and a culture of openness
- Protect the Council's reputation
- Encourage internal reporting and minimise unnecessary external disclosures

5. Legal Context

- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA):** Protects workers from detriment for making a protected disclosure.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR:** Governs processing and retention of personal data related to whistleblowing investigations.

Procedural Elements (How the Policy Works in Practice)

6. Making a Disclosure

Workers should raise concerns at the earliest opportunity, verbally or in writing, with:

- Their line manager
- Executive Officer

7. Principles of Whistleblowing

- All workers must maintain confidentiality
- Workers are encouraged to give their name; anonymous concerns are harder to investigate
- No adverse action will be taken against a worker raising a genuine concern
- Frivolous, malicious, or untrue reports may result in disciplinary action

8. Responding to a Disclosure

The manager receiving the concern will:

- Assess seriousness and decide proportionate action

- Record reasons for decisions, including whether to investigate anonymous reports

9. Investigation

- Investigations will be proportionate to the concern raised
- Urgent matters (e.g., Police referrals) are prioritised
- Timescales may vary; the worker will be kept informed appropriately

10. Outcome of Investigation

- Outcomes are shared with the worker (subject to legal/confidentiality constraints)
- Appropriate management actions are taken to address concerns
- Cases are reviewed to ensure resolution

11. External Disclosures

External reporting should only occur if:

- Internal reporting has not resolved the concern, or
- Raising the concern internally would put the worker at risk

Possible external contacts include:

- An elected Member of the Council
- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work)
- Prescribed persons listed by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
- The Police

12. Record Keeping

- Whistleblowing records are retained for 6 years plus the current year, except where other statutory retention rules apply (e.g., child protection records)

13. Examples of Malpractice

- Fraud, corruption, or financial irregularities
- Misuse of public funds
- Breach of legal obligations
- Health and safety risks
- Environmental damage
- Criminal offences
- Failure to follow financial/contractual rules
- Showing undue favour to a contractor or job applicant
- Miscarriages of justice
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above



Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy and Finance Approved: April 2015
Last Reviewed: November 2025
Due for Next Review: November 2028

Policy Elements (Principles and Scope)

1. Policy Statement

Fleet Town Council is committed to providing a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

Bullying, harassment, or victimisation of any kind will not be tolerated. Such behaviour undermines wellbeing and performance and may be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent and address such conduct, including disciplinary action where appropriate, up to and including dismissal.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Fleet Town Council.
- Members of Fleet Town Council.
- Agency workers, contractors, and volunteers working on behalf of the Council.

The policy should be read alongside the Equal Opportunities Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, and Grievance Procedure.

The Council also has a duty of care to protect employees from bullying or harassment by members of the public or third parties.

3. Policy Outcomes

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote a culture of dignity, respect, and inclusion.
- Prevent and respond to incidents of bullying and harassment.
- Clarify unacceptable behaviour and the standards expected.
- Provide fair and consistent processes for raising and addressing concerns.
- Protect those who raise concerns in good faith from victimisation.

4. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- ACAS Code of Practice and Guidance on Bullying and Harassment

5. Key Definitions

Harassment

As defined by the Equality Act 2010: “Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”

Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Harassment may occur by association or perception, even where the assumption is incorrect.

Bullying

Offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or injures the recipient.

Legitimate management actions such as performance review or discipline, when conducted fairly, do not constitute bullying.

Victimisation

Unfavourable treatment of someone because they have made, or supported, a complaint of harassment or bullying. Victimisation is unlawful.

6. Responsibilities

Managers

- Promote a respectful workplace culture.
- Take prompt action to address concerns.
- Treat all complaints seriously, fairly, and confidentially.
- Seek advice from the Executive Officer or HR support as needed.

Employees

- Treat colleagues and others with respect.
- Refrain from any form of bullying or harassment.
- Report concerns early and co-operate with investigations.

Members

- Uphold the same standards when dealing with officers and colleagues.
- Comply with the Members’ Code of Conduct.

Procedural Elements (How the Policy Works in Practice)

7. Raising a Concern

Informal Resolution (Stage 1)

- Where possible, the person experiencing the behaviour should make it clear that it is unwelcome and must stop.
- If uncomfortable doing so, they may seek help from a line manager, colleague, trade union representative, or the Executive Officer.
- Many issues can be resolved at this stage if the behaviour was unintended.

Formal Complaint (Stage 2)

- If informal action is inappropriate or ineffective, a written complaint should be made to the Executive Officer.
- If the complaint concerns the Executive Officer, it should be sent to the Chairman of the Council (or relevant committee).
- The complaint should include details of what happened, when, and any witnesses.

The matter will be investigated under the Grievance Procedure. Both parties will have the opportunity to be heard and may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

Possible outcomes may include mediation, disciplinary action, changes to working arrangements, or no further action.

Complaints Involving Councillors

- Informal concerns can be raised with the Executive Officer or Chairman.
- Formal complaints about potential breaches of the Code of Conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer.
- The Council will take appropriate steps to protect employees during investigations (e.g., limiting contact).

8. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

However, confidentiality cannot be absolute, as allegations must be disclosed to the person complained about to allow a fair investigation.

Breach of confidentiality may itself be treated as misconduct.

9. Malicious or Unfounded Complaints

Genuine complaints, even if not upheld, will not result in disciplinary action.

Malicious or deliberately false allegations may, however, lead to disciplinary action.

10. Support and Aftercare

The Council will support all parties involved in a complaint, including access to counselling or occupational health support where appropriate.

Learning from complaints will be used to strengthen culture, training, and management practice.

11. Review and Monitoring

The Executive Officer will review all cases and report any learning points to the Establishment Committee (without identifying individuals).

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.



Grievance Policy

Policy and Finance Approved: January 2015
Last Reviewed: November 2025
Due for next Review: November 2028

Policy Elements (Principles and Scope)

1. Policy Statement

Fleet Town Council is committed to maintaining positive working relationships and addressing workplace concerns promptly, fairly, and consistently. Employees have the right to raise genuine concerns about their employment without fear of disadvantage or victimisation.

This policy complies with the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Equality Act 2010, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Council encourages early resolution wherever possible, and will ensure all grievances are handled confidentially, impartially, and without delay.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Fleet Town Council.
- Agency staff, volunteers, and contractors working on behalf of the Council, where applicable.

It does not apply to:

- Issues subject to separate procedures (e.g. disciplinary matters, whistleblowing, or external complaints).
- Councillors, who are covered by the Code of Conduct for Members.

3. Aims

- To promote fair, transparent, and timely resolution of workplace issues.
- To encourage informal resolution wherever possible.
- To ensure employees know how to raise concerns and what to expect.
- To protect individuals from retaliation when grievances are raised in good faith.

4. Responsibilities

The Council and Line Managers

- Create an open and respectful working environment.
- Handle grievances sensitively and in confidence.
- Ensure decisions are based on fact and in line with this policy.
- Maintain records in accordance with GDPR.

Employees

- Raise concerns promptly and in good faith.
- Engage constructively with the process and any agreed outcomes.
- Respect confidentiality and avoid vexatious or malicious complaints.

Procedural Elements (How the Policy Works in Practice)

5. Informal Resolution

The Council and its employees benefit when grievances are resolved quickly and informally.

- Employees should raise issues with their **line manager** as soon as possible to explore solutions.
- Where the issue concerns the manager, the employee may raise it with the **Executive Officer** or **Chairman of the Establishment Committee**.
- Managers should respond promptly and fairly and may consider mediation if appropriate.

If informal action does not resolve the matter, or the issue is too serious for informal handling, the formal grievance process should be followed.

6. Formal Grievance Submission

The employee must submit a formal written grievance to the Executive Officer (or to the Chairman of the Council if the grievance concerns the Executive Officer).

The written grievance should include:

- The nature of the grievance.
- Relevant facts, dates, and evidence.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue.

7. Acknowledgement and Notification

Within **10 working days** of receiving the grievance, the employee will receive a written invitation to attend a **Grievance Meeting**.

The letter will include:

1. The names of the Chair and members of the Grievance Panel.
2. A summary of the grievance.
3. The date, time, and venue of the meeting (normally within **25 working days** of receipt).
4. The right to be accompanied by a **trade union representative, work colleague**, or (with agreement) another suitable companion.
5. A copy of this policy.
6. Confirmation that both sides may call witnesses, and their names should be submitted **five working days** before the meeting.
7. Confirmation that both sides must share supporting evidence at least **five working days** in advance.

8. The Grievance Meeting

At the meeting:

1. The Chair introduces the panel and outlines the process.
2. The employee (or companion) presents their grievance and desired outcome.
3. The panel may ask questions or call witnesses.
4. The employee (or companion) may question any witnesses.
5. The employee (or companion) will have an opportunity to summarise their case.
6. The Chair will explain the next steps and when to expect an outcome.

No audio or visual recording of proceedings is permitted.

Following the meeting:

- The Chair will consider all evidence and, where needed, conduct further investigation.
- The employee will receive the **Panel's decision in writing** within a reasonable timeframe, including:
 - The outcome and any actions to be taken.
 - Their right to appeal and the deadline for doing so.

9. Appeal

If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Council within **five working days** of receiving the outcome.

The appeal must specify the grounds, which may include:

- Failure to follow procedure.
- Decision not supported by evidence.
- Inappropriate or insufficient action.

- New evidence arising since original meeting.

An Appeal Panel (three Members not previously involved) will hear the case.

The employee will be invited to attend within 25 working days of receipt of the appeal and may again be accompanied.

At the meeting:

1. The Chair introduces the panel and explains the purpose of the meeting.
2. The employee (or companion) presents their grounds for appeal.
3. The panel may ask questions and deliberate privately.
4. The decision will be confirmed in writing within **five working days** of the meeting unless otherwise agreed.

The Appeal Panel may:

- Uphold the original decision, or
- Substitute its own decision.

The outcome will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the appeal meeting. The decision is **final**.

10. General Principles

- The Council may extend time limits with mutual agreement.
- Mediation may be offered at any stage if appropriate.
- Raising a grievance in good faith will not result in disciplinary action.
- If a grievance is raised during disciplinary proceedings, the two processes may run concurrently or sequentially at the Council's discretion.
- All grievance records will be held securely and confidentially in line with GDPR.
- If an employee is unable to attend a meeting for medical reasons, reasonable adjustments will be considered.

Name	Training	Provider	Completed	Notes	Cost
Alex Robins	Driving for business	Bright Safe	05/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Electrical safety awareness	Bright Safe	05/07/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Equality at work: intro to UK discrimination laws	Bright HR	30/05/2025	3 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Fire resistance in buildings	Bright Safe	04/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Fire Safety Awareness & Warden Duties	Bright Safe	23/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Health and safety awareness	Bright Safe	09/06/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	How to prevent sexual harassment	Bright hr	30/05/2025	1 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Lone working	Bright Safe	04/07/2025	3 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Noise awareness	Bright Safe	05/07/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Preparing method statements	Bright Safe	04/07/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Selling & serving alcohol awareness	Bright Safe	03/07/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Working at height	Bright Safe	04/07/2025	2 year renewal	
Alex Robins	Duty to Manage Asbestos	NATAS	10/03/2025		£60
Amy Stanton Hogg	How to prevent sexual harassment	Bright HR	14/05/2025	1 year renewal	
Amy Stanton Hogg	Lone working	Bright Safe	21/05/2025	3 year renewal	
Amy Stanton Hogg	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	12/08/2025	1 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Fire resistance in buildings	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	1 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Fire Safety Awareness & Warden Duties	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	1 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Health and safety awareness	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	2 year renewal	
Ben Crane	How to prevent sexual harassment	Bright hr	12/03/2025	1 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Legionella awareness	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	3 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Lone working	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	3 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Understanding GDPR	Bright hr	12/03/2025	3 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Working at height	Bright Safe	12/03/2025	2 year renewal	
Ben Crane	Duty to Manage Asbestos	NATAS	12/03/2025		£60
Charlotte Benham	Lvl 2 Safeguarding Everyone Refresher	Virtual College	28/07/2025		£25
Charlotte Benham	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	14/08/2025	1 year renewal	
Isabella Keir	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	29/09/2025	1 year renewal	
Isabella Keir	Cyber Security	Bright HR	24/09/2025	3 year renewal	
Isabella Keir	How to prevent sexual harassment	Bright HR	24/09/2025	1 year renewal	
Isabella Keir	Mental Health Awareness	Bright HR	24/09/2025	2 year renewal	
Isabella Keir	Understanding GDPR	Bright HR	24/09/2025	3 year renewal	

Katie McCaffrey	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	16/09/2025	1 year renewal	
Louise Rogers	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	18/08/2025	1 year renewal	
Rita Tong	Driving for business	Bright Safe	01/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Rita Tong	Fire resistance in buildings	Bright Safe	01/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Rita Tong	Fire Safety Awareness & Warden Duties	Bright Safe	01/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Rita Tong	IOSH	IOSH	07/03/2025		£120
Rita Tong	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	10/09/2025	1 year renewal	
Rodney Marshall	Lvl 2 Door Supervisors in Private Security Industry	First Security Training	08/05/2025		
Rodney Marshall	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	02/04/2025	1 year renewal	
Ruairi McNulty	Fire Safety Awareness & Warden Duties	Bright Safe	19/08/2025	1 year renewal	
Ruari McNulty	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	18/08/2025	1 year renewal	
Sam Jolliffe	Food Allergy Awareness	Bright Safe	04/03/2025	3 year renewal	
Sam Jolliffe	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	11/07/2025	1 year renewal	
Sarah McKibbin	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	11/07/2025		
Sarah Moore	Legionella awareness	Bright Safe	23/06/2025	3 year renewal	
Sarah Moore	FilCa	SLCC	02/04/2025		
Sarah Moore	Mental Health 1st Aid	MIND/Connect 5	14/03/2025		
Sarah Moore	ACT Awareness	ACT Awareness E-Learning	08/08/2025	1 year renewal	