



Employment and Appeals Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 20 February 2023 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

Employment and Appeals Committee members present:

Councillors Lady D Atkins, Baxter, P Ellison, Rendell, A Turner and Webster

Failed to attend or tender apologies for absence

Councillors Armstrong, Fairbanks, Holden and Smith

Officers present:

Olivia Cordingley, Human Resources Advisor

Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary)

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

11 Declarations of interest

None.

12 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee meeting held on 31 October 2022 were **confirmed** as a correct record.

13 Policy Review

The Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Jane Collier, submitted a report presenting six policies and procedures that had been amended.

Olivia Cordingley, Human Resources Advisor, introduced the report and provided members with a brief overview of the policies.

13a Safeguarding Policy

Olivia Cordingley explained that the policy had been reviewed by designated safeguarding officers, which resulted in minor amendments to reflect post title changes and current practice.

13b Smoking Policy

Olivia Cordingley updated members that the policy had been amended to provide clarity around employees smoking during the working day. The policy included that employees should be on arranged breaks and 'clocked out' of work.

She added that the policy had been updated to include homeworkers. She acknowledged that it was challenging to monitor employees who smoked while working from home, but she emphasised the necessity of this policy, at least in part, for those who participated in virtual meetings and telephone calls. Olivia also highlighted to members that the boundary map that was attached to this policy had been removed as a means to encourage employees to not smoke at the front of the Civic Centre.

The Chair, Councillor Ann Turner, highlighted the difficulties of employee compliance regarding smoking when home working, Olivia reiterated that this section of the policy was primarily concerned with employees smoking cigarettes or electronic cigarettes during virtual meetings and telephone calls.

Members asked questions and received answers regarding designated smoking areas.

Several members questioned the inclusion of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in the policy and whether the use of the word "smoking" could be reviewed to ensure it also refers to e-cigarettes. Olivia highlighted to members that at section 5.6 of the policy it referred to electronic cigarettes (also known as vapes). Following further discussions, the group suggested that the inclusion of the following amended sentence at section 11.4 of the policy be taken into consideration:

"The Human Resources team is able to provide those wishing to stop smoking and/or the use of electronic cigarettes with appropriate literature".

13c Work Experience and Placement Policy

Olivia Cordingley explained that the policy had been amended to include additional information on internships. She added that other minor amendments had been made throughout.

Olivia responded to questions regarding the method of placements and the Safeguarding Children's Policy.

13d Flexible Retirement Policy

Olivia Cordingley stated that this policy had been updated to clarify that employees who wished to continue working beyond their agreed

retirement date could only do so following a break in continuous service and through the normal recruitment process.

In response to a question, Olivia clarified that before an employee submitted an application they should have considered the period they envisaged the reduction in hours/grade continuing until they retired completely. Once an employee had entered flexible retirement there wasn't an agreed process for them to reverse the process.

Olivia reassured members that Human Resources promoted retirement seminars for those employees who were beginning to consider retirement.

13e Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy

Olivia Cordingley explained to members that there had been minor amendments made throughout this policy.

In response to a question regarding Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Olivia explained that DBS checks were carried out if the role required.

13f Zero Tolerance Policy

Olivia Cordingley highlighted that this policy had been reviewed by Health and Safety and several amendments had been made. These included readability improvements, the elimination of a risk assessment in section 4.3 of the policy, the elimination of training that was no longer provided, and other small changes made throughout.

Olivia added that training was provided for appropriate employees, in particular client-facing roles, to manage conflict/personal safety.

In response to a question regarding incident reporting, Olivia explained that employees were encouraged to submit incident/accident reports (as appropriate) when subject to abuse or assault.

14 Decision taken

Following discussions, the committee **approved** each of the following Human Resources policies and arrangements:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Work Experience and Placement Policy
- Flexible Retirement Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.23 pm.

Date of Publication: 23.02.2023