

# Public Document Pack



Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,  
Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA  
[ceredigion.gov.uk](http://ceredigion.gov.uk)

6 March 2024

Dwynwen Jones

01545 572070

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to inform you that a Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at the HYBRID - NEUADD CYNGOR CEREDIGION, PENMORFA, ABERAERON / REMOTELY VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE on Tuesday, 12 March 2024 at 2.00 pm for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Apologies**
2. **Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**  
**Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**
3. **Family Leave and Support Policy, Leave and Absences Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Prevention and Management of Stress Policy, Driving at Work, Council Fleet Policy (reviewed). (Pages 3 - 112)**
4. **Report on Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2022 Statistical Return and Report of the Chief Coroner (Pages 113 - 130)**
5. **Complaints, Compliments and Freedom of Information half-yearly report (Pages 131 - 138)**
6. **Digital Strategy 2024-2030 (Pages 139 - 166)**
7. **Forward Work Programme (Pages 167 - 172)**
8. **To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes. (Pages 173 - 182)**

Members are reminded to sign the Attendance Register

A Translation Services will be provided at this meeting and those present are welcome to speak in Welsh or English at the meeting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Edwards', written in a cursive style.

**Miss Lowri Edwards**  
**Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services**

**To: Chairman and Members of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The remaining Members of the Council for information only.

## CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Corporate Resources & Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 12 March 2024

**Title:** New HR Policies

**Purpose of the report:** To review and recommend the following policies:

- Family Leave and Support Policy
- Leave and Absences Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Stress Management Policy
- Driving at Work Policy – Council Fleet (revised)

**Reason Scrutiny have requested the information:**

To review new and revised policies

**Background**

The People & Organisation Service has been continuing to review, develop and update key policies. Following consultation, the following policies have been discussed, amended and agreed by the recognised corporate trade unions:

- Family Leave and Support Policy
- Leave and Absences Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Prevention and Management of Stress Policy
- Driving at Work Policy – Council Fleet (revised)

The purpose of all employee policies and procedures is to clearly set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required, how they can gain advice and support and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure. The introduction of these policies has a negligible financial impact and it expected result in an overall cost saving through the reduction of sickness absence and the associated cost of providing cover for that absence.

**Family Leave and Support Policy**

This policy replaces elements of the current Work Life Balance Policy and focusses on the leave, pay and support arrangements across a number of family related areas including maternity, adoption, adoption through surrogacy, maternity/adoption support (previously paternity), shared parental leave, and parental bereavement leave. The revision of previous policy arrangements ensures that the Council is compliant with current legislation.

Proposed changes within the policy include:

- Outlines the requirements for Working Time Regulations and annual leave entitlement whilst on maternity or adoption leave
- Paid time off for partners to attend two antenatal appointments
- Provides greater clarity on procedures, pay and support available across suite of family leave arrangements

- Two weeks full pay for maternity/adoption support leave
- Introduces statutory parental bereavement leave following the death of a child under 18 or a stillbirth from 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, including two weeks full pay
- Provides up to two days paid leave for employees undergoing IVF treatment in addition to time off to attend hospital appointment
- Signposts to the Council's Carers Policy which outlines the support for those employees with caring responsibilities

### **Leave and Absences Policy**

This policy replaces elements of the current Work Life Balance Policy and the Annual Leave and Holiday Pay Policy. The policy focuses on the annual leave, time off for public duties, special leave and absences. The revision of previous policy arrangements ensures that the Council remains compliant with contractual amendments for employees under National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) terms and conditions.

Proposed changes within the policy include:

- Incorporate the changes made to annual leave entitlement for NJC employees following the 2022/23 national pay negotiations
- Reflects the changes to fixed annual leave between Christmas and New Year which ensures continuity of service delivery to the public
- Reduces the period in which time off in lieu (TOIL) can be taken from 13 weeks to 8 weeks
- Introduces paid time off to attend cancer screening
- Allows up to 90 minutes time off to attend blood donations but expectation is that these are arranged outside of working hours
- Clarifies the entitlement and eligibility for other special leave

### **Flexible Working Policy**

This policy replaces elements of the current Work Life Balance Policy and also incorporates elements of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy. The policy has three main areas: flexi-time scheme, hybrid working scheme and formal flexible working requests. Flexible working can allow employees to balance their work commitments with their responsibilities and interests outside of work. This can aid health and wellbeing, reduce turnover, increase motivation and talent attraction. The revision to the previous policy arrangements ensures that the Council is compliant with current legislation

Proposed changes within the policy include:

- Flexi scheme - reduces to a 4 week accounting period and the bandwidth reverts to pre-Covid parameters – 7:30am to 7:00pm
- Hybrid working scheme – work styles reduced to three, needs of the service remains the over-riding principle and hybrid working not a substitute for caring responsibilities
- Flexible working requests – updated to ensure compliance with new legislation regarding eligibility and the number of applications per annum

## **Prevention and Management of Stress Policy**

This is a new policy which aims to establish an effective and consistent approach to the prevention of work-related stress and to provide supporting services where cases of work-related and non-work-related stress are identified. The policy will also help managers and employees recognise and manage stress in a pro-active manner.

Whilst pressure and demand will be part of many workplace roles there are factors that can lead to employees feeling excessive pressure. If these are not properly managed they can lead to increased sickness, anxiety, depression or other mental ill-health. It is important to note that stress is a state, not an illness but if mismanaged it can lead to the development of mental and physical illnesses.

A decrease in the number of days taken annually as a result of stress related sickness absence will benefit the Council in terms of productivity and cost reduction for providing cover, where relevant, of that employee's absence.

The policy sets out a stress risk assessment framework which consists of

- Individual Stress Risk Assessment
- Team Stress Risk Assessment
- Workforce Risk Assessment

## **Driving at Work – Council Fleet** (revised)

The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy was approved and implemented in February 20022. To assist the operational administration of the policy some minor amendments have been proposed as follows:

- Amending the Driver Agreement to a Driver Protocol and removing the need for drivers of fleet vehicles to sign the document
- Clarifying that any changes to a driver's ability to drive a vehicle, whether due to health or licence issues, need to be reported to their supervisor who must then inform Fleet Management.
- Additional text for clarification of testing for controlled drugs

## **Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.**

Yes

### **Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

**Long term:** Through the implementation of these policies, the key aim is to support the recruitment and retention of employees in a flexible, skilled and committed workforce which deliver the Council's strategic objectives, working together with our public body partners, both now and in the long term.

**Collaboration:** Using the excellent working relationship we have with our recognised trade union partners, collaboration on these policies has taken place leading to the development of the final documents.

**Involvement:** The consultation on this policy with our recognised trade union partners has allowed the opportunity for them to comment on the

development of the policy on behalf of their members, ,i.e. our employees

**Prevention:** Recruitment in the public sector is challenging and this is unlikely to change in the near future. The key aim of this policy, alongside complementary policies, is to support the recruitment and retention of employees through offering competitive provision.

**Integration:** Through the implementation of these policies, the key aim is to support the recruitment and retention of employees in a flexible, skilled and committed workforce which deliver the Council's strategic objectives, working together with our public body partners, both now and in the long term.

**Recommendation(s):**

- To recommend the approval of the Family Leave and Support Policy by Cabinet
- To recommend the approval of the Leave and Absences Policy by Cabinet
- To recommend the approval of the Flexible Working Policy by Cabinet
- To recommend the approval of the Prevention and Management of Stress Policy by Cabinet
- To recommend the approval of amendments to the Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy by Cabinet

**Reasons for decision:**

- To ensure compliance with new legislation
- To support recruitment and retention, employee health and wellbeing, and operational effectiveness

**Contact Name:** Geraint Edwards

**Designation:** Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation

**Date of Report:** 19/02/2024

**Acronyms:**



Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council

# Family Leave & Support Policy



People & Organisation Service  
January 2024



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW**  
**LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Ceredigion County Council (the Council) is committed to supporting employees to achieve a healthy balance between their work and personal commitments. The Council recognises that many employees will have family responsibilities and that all employees may on occasions have a need to be absent from work.
- 1.1.2 The Family Support and Leave Policy outlines the entitlement of employees to a range of rights and provisions which aim to support them.
- 1.1.3 The Policy also signpost and reference other policies procedures and information that may assist and support employees.
- 1.1.4 Further information and guidance is also available to view on [CeriNet](#)

## 1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to all employees other than those who are employed by School Governing Bodies

# 2. Maternity Leave & Pay

Ceredigion County Council is committed to supporting new or expectant mothers throughout their pregnancy and return to work. In addition to statutory benefits, the Council also offers enhanced benefits to those who meet the qualifying length of service.

## 2.1 Definitions

The following terms are used within this policy:

- **EWC:** Expected Week of Childbirth: The expected week of childbirth is the week, beginning on the Sunday, during which the baby's birth is expected.
- **MATB1:** The maternity certificate, or form, which is provided to confirm a pregnancy and confirm the expected week of childbirth.
- **Qualifying week:** The 15th week before the expected week of childbirth

## 2.2 Statutory Maternity Leave

### 2.2.1 Entitlement

All employees are entitled to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave and 26 weeks additional maternity leave, regardless of the length of local government service.

### 2.2.2 Procedure

- 2.2.2.1 An employee should notify their Line Manager as soon as possible that they are pregnant. This is especially important for Health and Safety reasons and should they be taken ill at work. This will be kept confidential if they wish.

- 2.2.2.2 An employee should try to indicate to their Line Manager as soon as possible when they wish their maternity leave to start; however written notice must be given to your Line Manager by the end of the 15th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth.
- 2.2.2.3 The notification should include:
- That you will be absent from work because of pregnancy,
  - When you intend to start your maternity leave and
  - The date of your Expected Week of Childbirth.
- 2.2.2.4 An employee can do this by either writing to their line manager or by completing the form available on CeriNet as soon as the MAT B1 form is received from the doctor or midwife.
- 2.2.2.5 The employee will be informed of their expected date of return from their maternity leave within 28 days of their request being received.
- 2.2.2.6 If possible, an employee's Line Manager would also appreciate an indication of whether you intend to return to work.
- 2.2.2.7 An employee should check their entitlement to maternity leave and pay. Entitlements will depend on their length of continuous local government service.
- 2.2.2.8 For further guidance on the procedure please follow the [Maternity Procedure Flow Chart/Guidance information here](#)

## 2.3 Eligibility for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

2.3.1 In order to qualify for SMP an employee must fulfil the following criteria:

- Have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks (irrespective of the number of hours worked) into the 15th week before the EWC.
- Have average weekly earnings equal or not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Contributions which is in force during the qualifying week.
- Still be pregnant at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC or have already been through childbirth.
- Have stopped working for their employer wholly or partly because of pregnancy or childbirth.
- Provide their Line Manager with notice of their maternity absence.
- Provide their Line Manager with evidence of their EWC.

2.3.2 If an employee is not eligible for SMP then they may be eligible for Maternity Allowance.

## 2.4 Eligibility for Maternity Allowance (MA)

To qualify for MA an employee must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be pregnant and have reached or been through childbirth before reaching the commencement of the 11th week before the EWC.
- Have been an employed or self-employed earner for at least 26 weeks in the 66 weeks ending with the week before the EWC.

- Not be entitled to statutory maternity pay for the same week in respect of the same pregnancy.

## 2.5 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

- 2.5.1 Where an employee has indicated that they do not intend to return to work, they will be entitled to 39 weeks SMP / MA.
- 2.5.2 The first 6 weeks is payable at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings. The remaining 33 weeks is payable at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

## 2.6 Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

- 2.6.1 An employee must have at least one year's continuous local government service to qualify for occupational maternity pay.
- 2.6.2 Length of continuous local government service is calculated at the beginning of the 11th week before an employee's EWC. The employee's service must be unbroken for 1 year prior to this date.
- 2.6.3 OMP is paid on the understanding that the employee will return to local authority employment, therefore, an employee will be required to repay payments made in excess of SMP during the 12 weeks at 50% if they do not return to work.
- 2.6.4 OMP will also have to be repaid if the employee leaves local authority employment within 3 months after their return.
- 2.6.5 OMP will not have to be repaid in cases of compulsory redundancy where the right to return to work has been removed. There may be a requirement to repay OMP in cases of voluntary redundancy. Any repayment will form part of the voluntary redundancy settlement achieved through agreement.
- 2.6.6 **For all employees except Teachers** - an employee with over one year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before EWC will have their OMP entitlement offset against any Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) paid in the first 6 weeks. During the next 12 weeks, they will be paid 50% of their pay plus SMP providing that combined it does not exceed their normal full pay. During the remaining 21 weeks, the employee shall receive SMP.
- 2.6.7 **For Teachers** - an employee with over one year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before EWC will receive full pay for the first 4 weeks. For the following 2 weeks their OMP entitlement will be offset against any SMP paid. During the next 12 weeks, they will be paid 50% of their pay plus SMP (providing that combined it does not exceed their normal full pay). During the remaining 21 weeks, the employee shall receive SMP.

## 2.7 Maternity Pay Table

### 2.7.1

JNC & Soulbury	Pay entitlement
Continuously employed for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the EWC	39 weeks SMP or MA

More than 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the EWC	18 weeks OMP, i.e. 6 weeks at 9/10 of pay, 12 weeks at 50% pay plus SMP and then 21 weeks at SMP
<b>Centrally employed teachers</b> Continuously employed for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the EWC	39 weeks SMP or MA
More than 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the EWC	18 weeks OMP, i.e. 4 weeks full pay, 2 weeks at 9/10 pay, 12 weeks at 50% pay plus SMP and then 21 weeks at SMP

2.7.2 If an employee becomes eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of their maternity leave (whether ordinary maternity leave or additional maternity leave), the higher or standard rate of statutory maternity pay will be recalculated to take account of the pay rise, regardless of whether statutory maternity pay has already been paid. This means SMP will be recalculated and increased retrospectively, or that an employee may qualify for SMP where they did not previously. The employee will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between SMP already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

## 2.8 Maternity Leave and pay following a stillbirth or neonatal death

- 2.8.1 If an employee gives birth to a stillborn baby before the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, it is treated as a miscarriage. As a result, they would not qualify for maternity leave or pay.
- 2.8.2 An employee is entitled to maternity leave and pay (provided they meet the qualifying conditions indicated above) if they deliver a stillborn baby after the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- 2.8.3 If an employee gives birth at any time during their pregnancy to a baby born alive, but who sadly passes away soon after, they would be entitled to SMP or MA, providing the qualifying conditions indicated above are met.
- 2.8.4 For further information regarding entitlement following a stillbirth please see the information leaflet on CeriNet.

## 2.9 Time off for antenatal classes

- 2.9.1 Once an employee has advised their Line Manager that they are pregnant, they will be entitled to paid time off to attend antenatal appointments, including travel time, as advised by her doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor. In order to be entitled to take time off for antenatal care, an employee is required to produce a certificate from their doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor, stating that they are pregnant. Except in the case of the first appointment, an employee should also produce evidence of the appointment, such as a medical certificate or appointment card, if requested to do so.

- 2.9.2 Antenatal care may include relaxation and parent craft classes that the employee's doctor, midwife, or health visitor has advised them to attend, in addition to medical examinations.
- 2.9.3 Fathers and partners are able to take paid time off, including travel time, to attend up to two antenatal appointments. As above, evidence should be produced, unless it is the first appointment, if requested to do so.
- 2.9.4 All employees should endeavour to give their Line Manager as much notice as possible of antenatal appointments and, wherever possible, try to arrange them as near to the start or end of the working day.

## 2.10 Health and Safety

- 2.10.1 There is an obligation on the Council to conduct a risk assessment when informed that an employee is pregnant.
- 2.10.2 Once this assessment has been undertaken appropriate action must be taken to reduce any risks identified.
- 2.10.3 The risk assessment will normally be undertaken by their Line Manager or alternatively where there are specific risk factors this may be carried out by the Corporate Health & Safety Team.
- 2.10.3 Information and guidance on the risk assessment for new and expectant mothers is available on [CeriNet](#).

## 2.11 Deciding when to leave work

- 2.11.1 An employee can start their maternity leave on any day of the week.
- 2.11.2 An employee cannot start their maternity leave prior to 11 weeks before their EWC, unless the baby is born prematurely before that date.
- 2.11.3 An employee can change their leave date as long as they notify their Line Manager of the new start date by whichever is the earlier of:
  - 28 days before the date they originally intended to start their leave;
  - 28 days before the new date they want to start their leave.
- 2.11.4 If an employee is absent for a maternity related illness during the 4 weeks before the start of their EWC, their maternity leave automatically begins.
- 2.11.5 An employee should also decide whether they would like to receive all of their maternity pay as it falls due or whether they would prefer the Pay & Benefits Section to withhold the part of OMP that is repayable if the employee does not return to work.
- 2.11.6 If an employee wishes to resign from work under the SMP scheme, they can do so up to 14 weeks before their EWC, however, they will not receive SMP until the 11th week.

## 2.12 Contact during maternity leave

- 2.12.1 Before the start of an employee's maternity leave their Line Manager will discuss ways in which to keep in touch during their leave. The Council reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with employees during maternity leave.

- 2.12.2 This may be to discuss employees' plans for their return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence.
- 2.12.3 If there are any major changes proposed to an employee's job or service whilst they are on maternity leave, they will be consulted on these changes in the same way as all other employees and may attend consultation meetings whilst on maternity leave.

## 2.13 Keeping in touch (KIT) days

- 2.13.1 With the exception of the first 2 weeks following the day of childbirth an employee may agree to "work" for up to 10 days without bringing their maternity leave to an end and without the loss of SMP/OMP. These 'keeping-in-touch' days can be taken during ordinary maternity leave and/or additional maternity leave.
- 2.13.2 'Work' is defined as any work undertaken within an employee's contract of employment and may include attending training days or any other activity e.g. staff meetings undertaken for the purpose of keeping in touch with the workplace. Any period of work undertaken during a KIT day constitutes one of the 10 days even if the work is only an hour or two in length.2.12.3A Line Manager has no right to require an employee to carry out any work during maternity leave and employees have no right to undertake any work during maternity leave. Any work undertaken and the hours worked on KIT days, is entirely a matter for agreement between employees and their Line Manager.
- 2.13.4 If an employee is entitled to receive statutory SMP/OMP for any week during which they attend work for KIT days, they will still receive this in the usual way. In addition, the Council will pay for each hour worked during a KIT day at the normal contractual rate of pay for the hours worked which will be offset against SMP/OMP.
- 2.13.5 If an employee does agree to undertake keeping-in-touch days this will not extend the maternity leave period by those days. If an employee goes over the 10 keeping-in-touch days, they will lose a week's SMP/OMP for any week in which a day is worked.
- 2.13.6 Once a keeping-in-touch day has been worked, the employee should complete the KIT days claim form and forward this for authorisation to the Line Manager who will arrange payment.

## 2.14 Returning to work after maternity leave

- 2.14.1 All employees who take maternity leave have the right to return to work at any time during either ordinary or additional leave, except during the first 2 weeks from the day of childbirth, subject to following the notification procedures set out below.
- 2.14.2 If an employee decides to return to work at the end of their additional maternity leave they are not required to give any notice of their return date as it is presumed that is their intended date of return. However, if an employee wishes to return early they must give at least 8 weeks' notice of their intended return date, preferably in writing. If they do not give the required notice period to return early, their Line Manager can postpone an employee's return to work to such a



date as will provide 8 weeks' notice or until the end of their maternity leave period if this occurs first.

- 2.14.3 If an employee has indicated the date that they wish to return to work and thereafter decides to postpone that date, they must give 8 weeks' notice that they intend to postpone their return to work.
- 2.14.4 An employee must inform their Line Manager if they are unable to return to work after the end of their maternity leave due to ill health by following the required procedure for reporting absence. An employee's absence, if they postpone their return to work because of ill health, will be covered by the occupational sickness scheme and the Council's Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy will apply.
- 2.14.5 Following maternity leave, the employee has a right to return to work in a role which they were employed under their original contract of employment unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case the employee will be offered a suitable alternative on terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have been applicable if they had not been absent.
- 2.14.6 The employee is entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy if, because of redundancy, it is not possible or practical for them to return to their job. There may also be circumstances of general reorganisation (which would have occurred if they had not been absent) that would necessitate a change in their original job. In such cases the employee will be subject to the provision of the Council's Managing Change Policy.
- 2.14.7 The alternative post offered in both these circumstances should be suitable to the employee, appropriate to the circumstances and in the same capacity. The terms and conditions of employment should not be substantially less favourable to the employee than if they had been able to return to their original job.
- 2.14.8 Interruptions to work (due to industrial action or other reasons), where it is unreasonable to expect the employee to return on the notified day, may result in their return being postponed until work resumes or it is reasonably practical for them to return.
- 2.14.9 An employee must give the normal notice period required under their terms and conditions if they do not intend to return to work after their maternity leave period, unless they have already done so prior to commencing their maternity leave.

## 2.15 Breastfeeding

- 2.15.1 There are a variety of health benefits to continuing breastfeeding and where an employee is returning to work this does not mean that they should feel that they must stop.
- 2.15.2 If an employee wishes to express during work time a suitable venue and storage facility can be provided. If an employee wishes for this to occur, then they will need to contact their manager as least 4 weeks prior to return to ensure facilities are available.
- 2.15.3 For more information on continuing to breastfeed while at work visit the NHS choices website (breastfeeding and returning to work).

## 2.16 Annual leave/Bank holidays

### 2.16.1 Arrangements for all employees except teachers

- 2.16.1.1 An employee will still receive their annual leave entitlement whilst they are on maternity leave and they may choose to use it to extend the time they have off after their paid maternity period ends or to take it before the start of their paid maternity leave. Employees are encouraged, where possible, to take any annual leave prior to commencing maternity leave. Should it not be possible to take all annual leave prior to commencing maternity leave then any carried over leave would need to be taken before the employee returns to work, i.e. immediately following the end of their maternity leave.
- 2.16.1.2 An employee will be entitled to time off in lieu for any bank holidays that occur on the days that they are contracted to work whilst they are on maternity leave.

### 2.16.2 Arrangements for centrally employed teachers

- 2.16.2.1 Note: In this section, the term “teacher” means employees who are employed in accordance with the *School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (the “Blue Book”)*.
- 2.16.2.2 Whilst teachers do not have a ‘contractual’ entitlement to annual leave, they do have a ‘statutory’ right under the Working Time Regulations (WTR). With effect 1 April 2009, this entitlement is 28 days (5.6 weeks). **(Please note that this is not an additional entitlement to annual leave on top of the current school closure arrangements).**
- 2.16.2.3 Under the requirements of the WTR, a teacher who takes maternity leave will be able to accommodate the 28 days statutory annual leave within school closure periods at a time outside of her maternity leave. The Council will not treat any part of the maternity leave period as statutory annual leave. The statutory annual leave entitlement can be offset by any period of school closure that has taken place in the leave year in question, i.e. both before and after the maternity leave period. For the purposes of managing statutory annual leave in relation to maternity leave, the leave year for teachers is 1 September in a given year to 31 August in the following year.
- 2.16.2.4 Teachers will be required to accommodate their statutory entitlement to annual leave, during school closure periods, either before or after the maternity leave period. Where there is sufficient time to accommodate the statutory leave in the current leave year during school closure periods, no carry over of outstanding leave will be permitted.
- 2.16.2.5 If there are insufficient school closure periods to accommodate statutory annual leave in that leave year, or the return from maternity leave is so close to the end of the leave year that there is not enough time to accommodate all the statutory annual leave entitlement, the teacher will be permitted to take any outstanding leave forward to the next leave year. This outstanding leave entitlement will then be offset

during the remaining periods of school closure after the 28 days' statutory annual leave for that leave year has been accommodated. Additional guidance can be found on [Accrual of Statutory Leave during Maternity Leave](#).

- 2.16.2.6 It will not be possible for a teacher to obtain payment in lieu of untaken statutory annual leave instead of taking leave during the leave year except where employment terminates.

## 2.17 Transfer of Maternity Leave

Shared parental leave enables mothers to commit to ending their maternity leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from maternity leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. (See Shared Parental Leave section 4 of this Policy).

## 3. Adoption/Surrogacy Leave & Pay

The Council is also committed to supporting employees who welcome children into their families through the adoption or adoption through a surrogacy process.

Adoption is where a child/children is/are matched and placed with them for adoption or in the case of adoption through surrogacy where the intended parents have applied for a parental order.

Where adoption pay and entitlements are referred to these will also apply in the case of adoption through surrogacy.

### 3.1 Definitions

The following terms are used within this policy:

- **Matching Certificate:** This form is a certificate completed by the appropriate adoption agency and confirms that the adopter has been matched with a child for adoption. This form will include the following information:
  - Name and address of the adoption agency and of the employee concerned.
  - Date the child is expected to be placed for adoption, or the date the child was placed for adoption.
  - Date the employee was told by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child.
- **Matched/matching:** This means the adoption agency has decided that the person is suitable to adopt a particular child.
- **Placed:** This means the child starts living with the person permanently with a view to being formally adopted in the future. They may have stayed with them before this date.
- **Adopter:** This means the person or persons who are going to adopt the child. They may be going to adopt the child on their own, or they may be going to adopt the child with their partner.

### 3.2 Adoption Leave Pay

#### 3.2.1 Entitlement

3.2.1.1 Adoption leave is available to all employees who adopt through a UK or overseas approved adoption agency. Further guidance on Overseas Adoption is available on **CeriNet**

3.1.1.2 All employees are entitled to 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave (OAL) and 26 weeks' additional adoption leave (AAL), regardless of the length of local government service.

#### 3.2.2 Procedure

3.2.2.1 An employee can start their adoption leave either:

- a) From the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected).
- b) From a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

- 3.2.2.2 The leave can begin on any day of the week.
- 3.2.2.3 Employees are required to inform their Line Manager of their intention to take adoption leave within 7 days of being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption, unless this is not reasonably practical.
- 3.2.2.4 An employee can do this by either writing to their line manager or by completing the form available on **CeriNet**. Employees should endeavour to keep their Line Manager up to date with the adoption process to minimise operational disruption, as notice given to the adoptive parent is often very short.
- 3.2.2.5 Employees will be required to give the Council documentary evidence – a ‘matching certificate’ or a letter – from their adoption agency as evidence of their entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay. The matching certificate or letter **must** include the following information:
- The name and address of the adoption agency.
  - The name and address of the employee.
  - The date the child is expected to be placed for adoption or the date the child was placed for adoption.
  - The date the employee was told by the adoption agency that they had been matched with a child.
- 3.2.2.6 An employee will be notified within 28 days of receipt of the Adoption recording form to confirm the date they would be required to return to work following adoption leave.
- 3.2.2.7 Adopters will be able to change their mind about the date on which they want their leave to start providing they tell their Line Manager at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).
- 3.2.2.8 An Adoption flow chart is available on **CeriNet**
- 3.2.2.9 Where a couple jointly adopts a child, only one of them will be entitled to take adoption leave, the couple can choose which. The other adoptive parent may be entitled to take Maternity / Adoption Support (Paternity) Leave as the ‘secondary adopter’ or Shared Parental Leave provided that they meet the relevant statutory criteria.

### 3.3 If Adoption Leave is Disrupted

- 3.3.1 A disruption to Adoption leave can occur if:
- The employee is notified that the placement will not take place.
  - The child is returned to the adoption agency after placement.
- 3.3.2 Where disruption takes place the entitlement to adoption leave and pay (if applicable) will continue for a further 8 weeks from the end of the week in which disruption occurred, unless the entitlement to leave and/or pay would have ended earlier in the normal course of events.

### 3.4 Adoption Pay Table

#### 3.4.1

<b>JNC &amp; Soulbury</b>	<b>Pay entitlement</b>
Continuously employed for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the Qualifying Week.	39 weeks SAP
More than 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the Qualifying Week	18 weeks OAP, i.e. 6 weeks at 9/10 of pay, 12 weeks at 50% pay plus SAP and then 21 weeks at SAP
<b>Centrally employed teachers</b> Continuously employed for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the Qualifying Week	39 weeks SAP
More than 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11th week before the Qualifying Week	18 weeks OAP, i.e. 4 weeks full pay, 2 weeks at 9/10 pay, 12 weeks at 50% pay plus SAP and then 21 weeks at SAP

### 3.5 Eligibility for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

- 3.5.1 Employees are entitled to SAP if they have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks at the end of their Qualifying Week; are still employed by the Council during that week and their average weekly earnings during the eight weeks ending with the Qualifying Week (the **Relevant Period**) are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the Government.
- 3.5.2 SAP is payable for up to 39 weeks. It stops being payable if an employee returns to work sooner or if the placement is disrupted.
- 3.5.3 SAP accrues with each complete week of absence but payments shall be made on the next normal payroll date. Income Tax, National Insurance and pension contributions shall be deducted as appropriate.
- 3.5.4 If an employee leaves employment for any reason (for example, if they resign or are made redundant) they shall still be eligible for SAP if they have already been notified by an agency that they have been matched with a child. In such cases, SAP shall start 14 days before the Expected Placement Date, or the day after their employment ends, whichever is the later.

### 3.6 Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

- 3.6.1 Where an employee has indicated that they do not intend to return to work, they will be entitled to 39 weeks SAP.
- 3.6.2 The first 6 weeks is payable at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings. The remaining 33 weeks is payable at a rate set by the Government for the

relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

### 3.7 Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP)

- 3.7.1 An employee must have at least one year's continuous local government service to qualify for OAP.
- 3.7.2 Length of continuous local government service is calculated at the beginning of the 11th week before the date an employee is matched with a child. Your service must be unbroken for 1 year prior to this date.
- 3.7.3 OAP is paid on the understanding that the employee will return to local authority employment, therefore, an employee will be required to repay payments made in excess of Statutory Adoption Pay during the 12 weeks at 50% if they do not return to work.
- 3.7.4 OAP will also have to be repaid if the employee leaves local authority employment within 3 months after their return.
- 3.7.5 OAP will not have to be repaid in cases of compulsory redundancy where the right to return to work has been removed. There may be a requirement to repay OAP in cases of voluntary redundancy. Any repayment will form part of the voluntary redundancy settlement achieved through agreement.
- 3.7.6 **For all employees except Teachers** - an employee with over one year's continuous local government service at the 11th week will have their OAP entitlement offset against any SAP paid in the first 6 weeks. During the next 12 weeks, they will be paid 50% of their pay plus SAP providing that combined it does not exceed their normal full pay. During the remaining 21 weeks, the employee shall receive SAP.
- 3.7.7 **For Teachers** - an employee with over one year's continuous local government service at the 11th week will receive full pay for the first 4 weeks. For the following 2 weeks their OAP entitlement will be offset against any SAP paid. During the next 12 weeks, they will be paid 50% of their pay plus SAP (providing that combined it does not exceed their normal full pay). During the remaining 21 weeks, the employee shall receive SAP.
- 3.7.8 If an employee becomes eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of their adoption leave (whether ordinary adoption leave or additional adoption leave), the higher or standard rate of statutory adoption pay will be recalculated to take account of the pay rise, regardless of whether statutory adoption pay has already been paid. This means that statutory adoption pay will be recalculated and increased retrospectively, or that an employee may qualify for statutory adoption pay where they did not previously. The employee will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between statutory adoption pay already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

### 3.8 Time off to attend adoption appointments

- 3.8.1 Once an employee has been matched with a child they will need to inform their Line Manager that they are adopting. They will be entitled to paid time off work, including travel time, to attend adoption appointments - up to 5 for the primary adopter.
- 3.8.2 In order to be entitled to take time off for adoption appointments, an employee is required to produce evidence of the appointment, e.g. a letter from the adoption agency.
- 3.8.3 The secondary adopter is able to take paid time off, including travel time, to attend up to two adoption appointments. As above, evidence should be produced if requested to do so.
- 3.8.4 All employees should endeavour to give their Line Manager as much notice as possible of adoption appointments and, wherever possible, try to arrange them near to the start or end of the working day.

### 3.9 Contact during adoption leave

- 3.9.1 Before the start of an employee's adoption leave their Line Manager will discuss ways in which to keep in touch during the period of leave. The Council reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with employees during adoption leave.
- 3.9.2 This may be to discuss employees' plans for their return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence. If there are any major changes proposed to an employee's job or department whilst they are on adoption leave, they will need to be consulted on these changes in the same way as all other employees, and may attend consultation meetings whilst on adoption leave.

### 3.10 Keeping in touch days (KIT)

- 3.10.1 With the exception of the first two weeks following the date of adoption an employee can agree to "work" for up to 10 days without bringing their adoption leave to an end and without loss of their SAP / OAP. These 'keeping-in-touch' days can be taken during both ordinary adoption leave and additional adoption leave.
- 3.10.2 'Work' is defined as any work undertaken within an employee's contract of employment and may include attending training days or any other activity e.g. staff meetings undertaken for the purpose of keeping in touch with the workplace. Any period of work undertaken during a KIT day constitutes one of the 10 days even if the work is only an hour or two in length.
- 3.10.3 A Line Manager has no right to require an employee to carry out any work during adoption leave and employees have no right to undertake any work during adoption leave. Any work undertaken and the hours worked on KIT days, is entirely a matter for agreement between employees and their Line Manager.
- 3.10.4 If an employee is entitled to receive statutory SAP/OAP for any week during which they attend work for KIT days, they will still receive this in the usual way. In addition, the Council will pay for each hour worked during a KIT day at the



normal contractual rate of pay for the hours worked which will be offset against SMP/OMP.

- 3.10.5 If an employee does agree to undertake KIT days this will not extend their adoption leave by those days. If an employee goes over their 10 KIT days, they will lose a week's SAP / OAP for any week in which a day is worked.
- 3.10.6 Once KIT day has been worked, the employee should complete the **Keeping in Touch Payment Form** and forward this for authorisation to the Line Manager who will arrange payment.

### 3.11 Returning to work after Adoption Leave

- 3.11.1 If an employee intends to take the full adoption leave entitlement, they do not have to give notice of their intended return to work. However if they wish to return to work early, they must give 8 weeks notice of the intended early return date. Otherwise their Line Manager can delay the employee's return to work for the length of the notice period or until the end of the adoption leave period if this occurs first.
- 3.11.2 An employee must inform their Line Manager if they are unable to return to work after the end of their adoption leave due to ill health by following the required procedure for reporting absence. An employee's absence, if they postpone their return to work because of ill health, will be covered by the occupational sickness scheme and the Council's Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy will apply.
- 3.11.3 Following adoption leave, the employee has a right to return to work in a role which they were employed under their original contract of employment unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case the employee will be offered a suitable role on terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have been applicable if they had not been absent.
- 3.11.4 The employee is entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy if, because of redundancy, it is not possible or practical for them to return to their job. There may also be circumstances of general reorganisation (which would have occurred if they had not been absent) that would necessitate a change in their original job. In such cases the employee will be subject to the provision of the Council's Managing Change Policy.
- 3.11.5 The alternative post offered in both these circumstances should be suitable to the employee, appropriate to the circumstances and in the same capacity. The terms and conditions of employment should not be substantially less favourable to the employee than if they had been able to return to their original job.
- 3.11.6 Interruptions to work (due to industrial action or other reasons), where it is unreasonable to expect the employee to return on the notified day, may result in their return being postponed until work resumes or it is reasonably practical for them to return.

### 3.12 Annual leave and bank holidays

#### **3.12.1 Arrangements for all employees except Teachers:**

- 3.12.1.1 An employee will still receive their annual leave entitlement whilst they are on adoption leave and may choose to use it to extend the time they

have off after their paid adoption period ends or to take it before the start of paid adoption leave. Employees are encouraged, where possible, to take any annual leave prior to commencing adoption leave. Should it not be possible to take all annual leave prior to commencing adoption leave then any carried over leave would need to be taken before the employee returns to work, i.e. immediately following the end of their adoption leave.

3.12.1.2 An employee will be entitled to time off in lieu of any bank holidays that occur on the days that they are contracted to work whilst on adoption leave.

### **3.12.2 Arrangements for centrally employed teachers:**

3.12.2.1 Note: In this section, the term “teacher” means employees who are employed in accordance with the *School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (the “Blue Book”)*.

3.12.2.2 Whilst teachers do not have a ‘contractual’ entitlement to annual leave, they do have a ‘statutory’ right under the Working Time Regulations (WTR). With effect from 1 April 2009, this entitlement is 28 days (5.6 weeks). **(Please note that this is not an additional entitlement to annual leave on top of the current school closure arrangements).**

3.12.2.3 Under the requirements of the WTR, a teacher who takes adoption leave will be able to accommodate the 28 days statutory annual leave within school closure periods at a time outside of their adoption leave. The Council will not treat any part of the adoption leave period as statutory annual leave. The statutory annual leave entitlement can be offset by any period of school closure that has taken place in the leave year in question, i.e. both before and after the adoption leave period. For the purposes of managing statutory annual leave in relation to adoption leave, the leave year for teachers is defined as 1 September in a given year to 31 August in the following year.

3.12.2.4 Teachers will be required to accommodate their statutory entitlement to annual leave, during school closure periods, either before or after the adoption leave period. Where there is sufficient time to accommodate the statutory leave in the current leave year during school closure periods, no carry over of outstanding leave will be permitted. 3.12.2.5

If there are insufficient school closure periods to accommodate statutory annual leave in that leave year, or the return from adoption leave is so close to the end of the leave year that there is not enough time to accommodate all the statutory annual leave entitlement, the teacher will be permitted to take any outstanding leave forward to the next leave year. This outstanding leave entitlement will then be offset during the remaining periods of school closure after the 28 days’ statutory annual leave for that leave year has been accommodated.

3.12.2.6 It will not be possible for a teacher to obtain payment in lieu of untaken statutory annual leave instead of taking leave during the leave year except where employment terminates.

### 3.13 Transfer of Adoption Leave

Shared parental leave enables adopters to commit to ending their adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from adoption leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. (See Shared Parental Leave section of this policy).

## 4. Shared Parental Leave and Pay

Shared parental leave (SPL) enables employed mothers to switch part of their leave and pay into SPL and pay, provided both parents satisfy the eligibility requirements.

The mother can choose whether to give up her leave and the parents can choose how to share any SPL, either taking it in turns or taking time off together. Eligibility, notification and variation procedures are complex but at least eight weeks' notice must be given before the SPL starts.

SPL is also available to employees having a child placed for adoption with them (or in the case of an adoption from overseas, having a child they are adopting enter Great Britain).

### 4.1 Definition

For the purposes of the policy, please read the following:

- For mother also read adopter
- For maternity leave also read adoption leave
- For birth also read the date at which the child is placed for adoption
- For expected week of childbirth also read notified of having been matched
- "Partner" means the father of the child, or the person who, at the date of the child's birth, is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of the birth parent/adopter. This includes someone, regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation, who lives with the birth parent/adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is **not** the birth parents/adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.
- "Expected week of childbirth (EWC)" means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the birth parent's doctor or midwife expects them to give birth

### 4.2 Shared parental leave requests

- 4.2.1 If it is the mother who is employed by the Council, her partner must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take shared parental leave set out in this policy to their own employer, which may have its own shared parental leave policy in place. Similarly, if it is the partner who is employed by the Council, the mother must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take shared parental leave to their own employer.

- 4.2.2 The mother and the partner should ensure that they are each liaising with their own employer to ensure that requests for shared parental leave are handled as smoothly as possible.
- 4.2.3 The Council recognises that employees may have questions or concerns relating to their SPL rights. It is the Council's policy to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. As the SPL provisions are complex, if an employee wishes to take SPL, they should clarify the relevant procedures with the Human Resources Absence Team or their link HR Officer to ensure that they are followed correctly.
- 4.2.4 The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring all information is sent on immediately to Human Resources so that this discussion can be facilitated.
- 4.2.5 On receipt of the 'notification of entitlement' to take SPL from the employee the HR Absence Team may arrange an informal discussion with the employee and the employee's line manager to talk about their intentions and how they currently expect to use their SPL leave entitlement.
- 4.2.6 The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the leave proposed and what will happen while the employee is away from work. Where it is a request for discontinuous leave the discussion may also focus on how the leave proposal could be agreed, whether a modified arrangement would be agreeable to the employee and the Council, and what the outcome may be if no agreement is reached.

### 4.3 Shared parental leave

- 4.3.1 The amount of SPL that an employee is entitled to will depend on when the mother brings her maternity leave period to an end and the amount of leave that the other parent takes in respect of the child. SPL must be taken in blocks of at least one week. The employee can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block (in which case the Line Manager is required to accept the request as long as the employee meets the eligibility and notice requirements), or as a number of discontinuous blocks of leave (in which case the employee needs the Line Manager's agreement). A maximum of three requests for leave per pregnancy can be made by each parent.
- 4.3.2 The first two weeks following birth or adoption are the compulsory maternity/adoption leave periods i.e. the mother or primary adopter cannot curtail their maternity or adoption leave to take shared parental leave until two weeks after the birth or adoption and the maximum period that the parents could take as shared parental leave is 50 weeks between them.
- 4.3.3 The mother's partner can begin a period of SPL at any time from the date of the child's birth (however they should bear in mind that they are entitled to take up to two weeks' ordinary paternity leave following the birth of the child, which they will lose if shared parental leave is taken first). The mother and partner must take any SPL within 52 weeks of birth.

#### 4.4 Eligibility for shared parental leave

4.4.1 For employees to be eligible to take SPL, both parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

##### **4.4.2 Mother's eligibility for shared parental leave**

4.4.2.1 The mother is eligible for shared parental leave if she:

- has at least 26 weeks' continuous local government employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remains in continuous employment until the week before any period of shared parental leave that she takes;
- has, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- is entitled to statutory maternity leave in respect of the child; and complies with the relevant maternity leave curtailment requirements (or has returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave), and shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

4.4.2.2 In addition, for the mother to be eligible for shared parental leave, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child.

##### **4.4.3 Partner's eligibility for shared parental leave**

4.4.3.1 The partner is eligible for shared parental leave if he/she:

- has at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remains in continuous employment until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- has, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child; and
- complies with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

4.4.3.2 In addition, for the partner to be eligible for shared parental leave, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;

- be entitled to statutory maternity leave, statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant maternity leave or pay curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave).

#### 4.5 Notice requirement for shared parental leave

4.5.1 The notices that the parents must give to the relevant employer to be able to take shared parental leave are made up of three elements. They are:

- a "maternity leave curtailment notice" from the mother setting out when she proposes to end her maternity leave (unless the mother has already returned to work from maternity leave);
- a "notice of entitlement and intention" from the employee giving an initial, non-binding indication of each period of shared parental leave that he/she is requesting; and
- a "period of leave notice" from the employee setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave that he/she is requesting.

4.5.2 The notice periods set out below are the minimum required by law. However, the earlier the employee informs their Line Manager of their intentions, the more likely it is that they will be able to accommodate the employee's wishes, particularly in relation to periods of discontinuous leave.

4.5.3 Employees are advised that, if they have already decided the pattern of shared parental leave that they would like to take, they can provide more than one type of notice at the same time. For example, the mother could provide a maternity leave curtailment notice, notice of entitlement and intention and period of leave notice at the same time.

#### 4.6 Mother's notice curtailing maternity leave

4.6.1 Before the mother or partner can take shared parental leave, the mother must either return to work before the end of her maternity leave (by giving the required eight weeks' notice of her planned return) or provide her Line Manager with a maternity leave curtailment notice. The maternity leave curtailment notice must be in writing and state the date on which maternity leave is to end. That date must be:

- after the compulsory maternity/adoption leave period, which is the two weeks after birth/adoption;
- at least eight weeks after the date on which the mother gave the maternity leave curtailment notice to her Line Manager; and
- at least one week before what would be the end of the additional maternity leave period.

4.6.2 The mother must provide her maternity leave curtailment notice at the same time she provides either her notice of entitlement and intention or a declaration of consent and entitlement signed by the mother confirming that her partner has given his/her employer a notice of entitlement and intention.

## 4.7 Revocation of maternity leave curtailment notice

4.7.1 The mother can withdraw her notice curtailing her maternity leave in limited circumstances. The withdrawal of a maternity leave curtailment notice must be in writing and can be given only if the mother has not returned to work. The mother can withdraw her maternity leave curtailment notice if:

- it is discovered that neither the mother nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and the mother withdraws her maternity leave curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given;
- the maternity leave curtailment notice was given before the birth of the child and the mother withdraws her maternity leave curtailment notice within six weeks of the child's birth; or
- the partner has died

## 4.8 Employee's notice of entitlement and intention

4.8.1 The employee, whether the mother or the partner, must provide their Line Manager with a nonbinding written notice of entitlement and intention at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave. This notice must provide essential information including details of both the mother and partner, the leave to be taken and a declaration by **both** parties that they meet the eligibility criteria. An employee should provide this information by completing the form **Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take Shared Parental Leave**.

4.8.2 Within 14 days of receiving a notice of entitlement and intention from the employee, whether the mother or partner, the Human Resources Section will request from the employee:

- a copy of the child's birth certificate (or, if the child has not been born, a copy of the birth certificate within 14 days of the birth - if the birth certificate has yet to be issued after this period, a signed declaration stating the date and location of the child's birth will suffice); and
- the name and address of the other parent's employer (or a declaration that the other parent has no employer).

4.8.3 The employee has 14 calendar days from the date of the request to send Human Resources the required information.

## 4.9 Variation or cancellation of notice of entitlement and intention

4.9.1 The employee can vary or cancel the proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a notice of entitlement and intention, provided that he/she provides their Line Manager with a written notice. The written notice must contain:

- an indication as to when the employee intends to take shared parental leave (including the start and end dates for each period of leave);
- details of any periods of shared parental leave that have been notified through a period of leave notice;

- details of any periods of statutory shared parental pay that have been notified in relation to periods where shared parental leave was not to be taken; and
- a declaration signed by the mother and the partner that they agree to the variation.

4.9.2 Any indication of leave intended to be taken that the employee provides in a variation of notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until they provide a period of leave notice in relation to that period of leave. There is no limit on the number of variations of notice of entitlement and intention that the employee can make. An employee should complete the **“Notice to Take or Vary a period of Shared Parental Leave”**

#### 4.10 Employee's period of leave notice

4.10.1 To take a period of shared parental leave, the employee must provide their Line Manager with a written notice setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave requested in that notice.

4.10.2 A period of leave notice must be given not less than eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave requested in the notice. The notice may be given at the same time as a notice of entitlement and intention and can be a request for a continuous period of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

#### 4.11 Variation or cancellation of period of leave notice

4.11.1 The employee can vary or cancel the proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a period of leave notice, provided that they provide their Line Manager with written notice not less than eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled by the notice is due to commence.

4.11.2 The written notice can:

- vary the start date or the end date of any period of shared parental leave or cancel a request for leave;
- request that a continuous period of leave become discontinuous periods of leave; or
- request that discontinuous periods of leave become a continuous period of leave.

#### 4.12 Limit on number of requests for leave

The employee can provide a combined total of up to three period of leave notices or variations of period of leave notices per pregnancy.

#### 4.13 Continuous period of shared parental leave

If the employee submits a period of leave notice requesting one continuous period of leave, they will be entitled to take that period of leave.



#### 4.14 Discontinuous periods of shared parental leave

- 4.14.1 The employee may submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. For example, the mother and partner could request a pattern of leave from their respective employers that allows them to alternate childcare responsibilities.
- 4.14.2 If the employee submits a discontinuous periods of leave notice, the Line Manager, within the two weeks beginning with the date the period of leave notice was received by the Line Manager, must either:
- consent to the pattern of leave requested;
  - propose an alternative pattern of leave; or
  - refuse the pattern of leave requested.
- 4.14.3 If agreement is reached within those two weeks, the employee is entitled to take the leave on the dates agreed.
- 4.14.4 If no agreement has been reached within that two-week discussion period, the employee is entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of leave. In that event, the employee must choose a start date for the leave that is at least eight weeks from the date on which the period of leave notice was originally received by the Line Manager. The employee must notify their Line Manager of that date within seven calendar days of the end of the two-week discussion period. If the employee does not choose a start date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period, the period of continuous leave will start on the date of the first period of leave requested in the period of leave notice.
- 4.14.5 Alternatively, if the Line Manager has refused the request or no agreement has been reached during the two-week discussion period, the employee may withdraw their request for discontinuous periods of leave. The employee can withdraw a period of leave notice at any time on or before the 15th day after the period of leave notice was received. A notice for discontinuous leave that has been withdrawn before it is agreed does not count towards the total number of requests for leave that an employee can make.

#### 4.15 Shared parental pay (ShPP)

- 4.15.1 Statutory ShPP is available for eligible parents to share between them while on shared parental leave. The number of weeks' statutory ShPP available to the parents will depend on how much statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance the mother has been paid when their maternity/adoption leave or pay period ends.
- 4.15.2 A total of 39 weeks' statutory maternity/adoption pay, or maternity allowance is available to the mother. As there is a compulsory maternity/adoption leave period of two weeks, this means that a mother who ends their maternity/adoption leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' statutory ShPP with their partner (although it will normally be less than this because of the .15
- 4.15.3 The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available to the parents will depend on how much statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance the mother has been paid when her maternity leave or pay period ends.

- 4.15.4 Entitlement to statutory maternity and maternity allowance are outlined in the relevant Maternity Pay and Adoption Pay tables in Sections 1 & 2 above or on the Shared Parental Leave Pay section on [CeriNet](#).
- 4.15.5 Employees who take a period of maternity leave followed by one or more periods of shared parental leave are only eligible for the maximum of the maternity/ adoption pay entitlement ie when any periods of occupational maternity and occupational shared parental pay are combined.
- 4.15.6 Any statutory ShPP due during shared parental leave will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate. Current rates of entitlement are available on CeriNet
- 14.5.7 It is up to the parents as to who is paid the statutory ShPP and how it is apportioned between them.
- 14.5.8 Occupational Shared Parental Pay is paid on the understanding that the employee will return to the Council's employment, therefore, an employee will be required to repay payments made in excess of Statutory Shared Parental Pay as required if they do not return to work. Occupational Shared Parental Pay will also have to be repaid if the employee leaves the Council's employment within 13 weeks of their return.

#### 4.15 Eligibility for shared statutory parental pay (ShPP)

- 4.15.1 For employees to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, both parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

##### **4.15.2 Mother's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay**

- 4.15.2.1 The mother is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if she:

- has at least 26 weeks' continuous local government employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remains in continuous employment until the week before any period of shared parental pay that she gets;
- has normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- has, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- is absent from work and intends to care for the child during each week in which she receives statutory shared parental pay; and
- is entitled to statutory maternity pay in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period has been reduced.

- 4.15.2.2 In addition, for the mother to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child; and

- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks.

#### **4.15.3 Partner's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay**

4.15.3.1 The partner is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if he/she:

- has at least 26 weeks' continuous local government employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remains in continuous employment until the week before any period of shared parental pay that he/she gets;
- has normal weekly earnings for eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- has, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child; and
- is absent from work and intends to care for the child during each week in which he/she receives statutory shared parental pay.

4.15.3.2 In addition, for the partner to be eligible, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child; and
- be entitled to statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period or maternity allowance period has been reduced.

#### **4.16 Contact during shared parental leave**

4.16.1 Before the start of an employee's shared parental leave their Line Manager will discuss ways in which to keep in touch during their leave. The Council reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with employees during shared parental leave. This may be to discuss employees' plans for their return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence.

4.16.2 If there are any major changes proposed to an employee's job or service whilst they are on shared parental leave, they will be consulted on these changes in the same way as all other employees, and may attend consultation meetings whilst on shared parental leave.

#### **4.17 Shared parental leave in touch (SPLIT) days**

4.17.1 An employee (and their partner) can agree to "work" for up to 20 days each without bringing their shared parental leave and pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

- 4.17.2 'Work' is defined as any work undertaken within an employee's contract of employment and may include attending training days or any other activity e.g. staff meetings undertaken for the purpose of keeping in touch with the workplace. Any period of work undertaken during a SPLIT day constitutes one of the 20 days even if the work is only an hour or two in length.
- 4.17.3 A Line Manager has no right to require an employee to carry out any work and employees have no right to undertake any work during their shared parental leave. Any work undertaken and the hours worked on SPLIT days, is entirely a matter for agreement between employees and the Authority.
- 4.17.4 If an employee is entitled to receive statutory ShPP for any week during which they attend work for SPLIT days, they will still receive this in the usual way. In addition, the Authority will pay for each hour worked during a SPLIT day at the normal contractual rate of pay for the hours worked which will be offset against ShPP.
- 4.17.5 If an employee does agree to undertake SPLIT days this will not extend the shared parental leave period by those days. If an employee goes over the 20 SPLIT days, they will lose a week's SSPP / OSPP for any week in which a day is worked.
- 4.17.6 Once a keeping-in-touch day has been worked, the employee should complete the **Keeping in Touch days claim form** and forward this for authorisation to the Line Manager who will arrange payment.
- 4.18 Returning to work following shared parental leave
- 4.18.1 Following shared parental leave, the employee has a right to return to work in a role which they were employed under their original contract of employment and terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have been applicable if they had not been absent.
- 4.18.2 The employee is entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy if, because of redundancy, it is not possible or practical for them to return to their job. There may also be circumstances of general reorganisation (which would have occurred if they had not been absent) that would necessitate a change in their original job. In such cases the employee will be subject to the provision of the Council's Managing Change Policy.
- 4.18.3 An employee must inform their Line Manager if they are unable to return to work after the end of their shared parental leave due to ill health by following the Council's agreed procedure for reporting absence. An employee's absence, if they postpone their return to work because of ill health, will be covered by the occupational sickness scheme and the Council's Sickness Absence Policy will apply.
- 4.18.4 An employee must give the normal notice period required under their terms and conditions if they do not intend to return to work after their shared parental leave period, unless they have already done so prior to commencing their shared parental leave.

## 5. Maternity / Adoption Support (Paternity) Leave / Pay

Ceredigion County Council recognises that husbands and partners of new mothers have the right to leave and pay, following the birth of their child. The law refers to this as “Paternity” leave and pay, but as same sex partners are also eligible, this will subsequently be referred to as **Maternity / Adoption Support Leave**.

Where the child’s father or partner of the mother / adoptive parent is not available, a nominated carer may be entitled to leave and pay.

Support leave provided under this policy will be used for caring for a newborn child and supporting the mother, or caring for a child newly placed for adoption and supporting the parent.

### 5.1 Entitlements

An employee satisfying the eligibility criteria is entitled to the following:

- The child’s father, or partner of the mother / adoptive parent, may apply to take up to 2 weeks paid leave. This may be taken as one block of two weeks or as two separate one week blocks. The pay for this leave will be at full pay\*.
- A nominated carer is entitled to take up to one week’s paid leave and this must be taken in one block of a week. The pay for this leave is one week at full pay.
- In the case of multiple births, the individual will be entitled to only one application for Support Leave under this policy.
- If the child is stillborn after a pregnancy lasting 24 weeks, the individual will remain eligible for Support Leave.

*\* A week’s full pay is calculated as the normal weekly wage, i.e. the amount payable to the individual under the current contract of employment.*

### 5.2 Eligibility

- 5.2.1 All employees are entitled to one weeks paid maternity / adoption support leave irrespective of length of service.
- 5.2.2 To be entitled to the second week of statutory maternity/adoption support pay (for fathers or partners of the mother / adoptive parent only), employees must have at least 26 weeks local government continuous service before the end of the 15th week prior to the expected week of child birth / the date notification of adoption placement is received.
- 5.2.3 The leave must be taken at any time in the 52 weeks after birth / adoption placement date.
- 5.2.4 The individual must be the biological father or the partner of the child’s mother / adoptive parent, and will be responsible for the upbringing of the child. They must be someone that lives with the mother / adoptive parent in an enduring family relationship, but is not an immediate relative, OR is a nominated carer, nominated by the mother (or adoptive parent) as their primary provider of support at this time.

### 5.3 Application for maternity/adoption support leave

- 5.3.1 At least 15 weeks before the birth/placement is due to take place, an employee should tell their manager of their intention to take maternity/adoption support leave and the due/placement date
- 5.3.2 At least 28 days before the baby is due, an employee should tell their manager of their intention to take maternity/adoption support leave:
- When the leave will start (e.g. the day of the birth, the week after the birth or a predetermined date)
  - The intention to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave (where applicable)
- 5.3.3 This will give the manager sufficient time to prepare for an employee's time off work (i.e. to cover shifts etc.). An employee can do this verbally in the first instance but should be followed up with an application. An employee can submit an application by completing the **application form on CeriNet** . This must be made on or before the 15th week prior to the expected week of childbirth / as soon as notification of placement is received.
- 5.3.4 It is accepted that the precise dates may not be known in advance. Therefore, the anticipated dates should be noted on the application. The employee must then notify their Manager once the actual dates are known.

### 5.4 Transfer of maternity or adoption leave

If an employee proposes to return to work by giving proper notification, their spouse, civil partner or partner may be eligible to take shared parental leave (and shared parental pay) once they have returned to work. (see Shared Parental Leave section of this policy).

### 5.5 Special guardianship

- 5.5.1 The Special Guardianship (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 allows courts to consider applications for special guardianship and to issue special guardianship orders. A special guardianship order made by a court that places a child or a young person to live with someone permanently and gives care for that child or young person in a long term secure placement. In many cases, this will be a family member or friend, avoiding the need to place a child in foster care or for adoption.
- 5.5.2 It may be necessary for an employee who becomes a special guardian to take time off work when the child is first placed with them in order to settle the child or to ensure appropriate childcare arrangements can be put in place to allow the employee to continue to work.
- 5.5.3 Although there is no statutory entitlement to additional paid leave, special guardians have parental responsibility for their child once the special guardianship order has been granted and any leave taken following the order should, therefore, be considered under the Council's Leave Policy and the Family Friendly Policy.
- 5.5.4 Line Managers should be mindful of the exceptional nature of a special guardianship and support any reasonable requests for up to a maximum of 5 days paid leave and / or additional unpaid leave to allow an employee to fulfil their parental responsibilities.

## 6 Unpaid Parental Leave

### 6.1 Unpaid parental leave

- 6.1.1 The entitlement allows those employees with parental responsibility to take a maximum of 18 weeks unpaid leave after the birth or adoption of a child. The leave can be taken at any time up until the child's eighteenth birthday. The maximum entitlement for each (financial) year is 4 weeks.
- 6.1.2 Parental leave can be taken in one-week blocks by employees who are natural or adoptive parents, or who have formal parental responsibility.
- 6.1.3 The entitlement to leave is per child, therefore multiple births or multiple adoptions allows for an additional entitlement to be taken.
- 6.1.4 The leave is pro-rata for part-time employees, and if an employee has a working week that varies, the hours/weeks that an employee is normally required to work are used for calculation purposes.
- 6.1.5 Time taken as parental leave shall be treated as continuous service.

### 6.2 Eligibility

- 6.2.1 Eligible employees are those with parental responsibilities that have one year's continuous Local Government service and have parental responsibility for the child.
- 6.2.2 This means they must be named on one of the following:
  - the child's birth certificate
  - the child's adoption certificate
  - a parental order, for surrogacy
  - a legal or special guardianship
- 6.2.3 Step-parents can also have parental responsibility where it is agreed between all parents.
- 6.2.4 If someone is separated from the other parent or does not live with their child, they still have the right to parental leave if they have parental responsibility for their child

### 6.3 Taking parental leave for a disabled child

An employee can take parental leave in blocks of days rather than weeks if they are caring with for a disabled child for example if they are in receipt of one of the following for their child:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment

### 6.4 Notice and when to take leave

- 6.4.1 A minimum of 21 days' notice must be given to take leave of 1 week or more this is reduced to 7 days for parents of a disabled child who are requesting leave of less than one week.
- 6.4.2 If an employee is an expectant partner and is intending to take parental leave at the time of the birth of their child they should give 21 days' notice, where reasonably practical, prior to the expected week of childbirth of the mother of the

child. If an employee is to be an adoptive parent and they are intending to take leave at the time of the adoption they should give 21 days' notice, where reasonably practical, prior to the date of adoption.

- 6.4.3 All applications for leave can be made using the application on **CeriNet**
- 6.4.4 Parental leave must be taken to help with the child's welfare. The employee cannot use parental leave entitlement to take an extended holiday, and an employee is precluded from undertaking work for another employer whilst taking parental leave.
- 6.4.6 Evidence of parental responsibility and the age of the child should be supplied prior to leave being taken wherever possible i.e. original birth certificate, court order, adoption certificate etc. If an employee is unable to prove parental responsibility then the Council will consider the request for parental leave, however will reserve the right to refuse such a request.
- 6.4.7 The employee has a right to return to their existing job under the same terms and conditions.
- 6.4.8 Parental leave can be postponed where the operation of a business would be unduly disrupted if the leave is taken, however, leave cannot be postponed for more than six months from the date of the original request.
- 6.4.9 An exception to this is if an employee wishes to take parental leave at the time of the birth or adoption of a child then they cannot be asked to postpone their leave.
- 6.4.10 If leave has to be postponed, managers must discuss this with their employee, and confirm in writing no later than 7 days after the original request the reasons for the postponements of the leave and confirm the dates when the leave may be taken. The leave must be granted for the same length of time as the employee's original request.
- 6.4.11 Employees who fall sick during a period of parental leave and who can provide their Line Manager with a medical certificate to cover this period of sickness shall be entitled to pay under the sickness scheme, and this period shall not count towards their parental leave entitlement.

## 6.5 Pension provision

- 6.5.1 If the employee is a Local Government Pension member and the period of approved unpaid absence is under 30 days, they will automatically continue to make contributions. However, if applying for leave in excess of 30 consecutive days, they will be asked on the application form if they wish to make contributions for the period of absence over 30 days.
- 6.5.2 If they are a member of the Teachers; Pensions Scheme pension contributions cannot be made during a period of unpaid leave.



## 7. Unpaid Time Off for Dependants

Time off for dependants allows employees to take a reasonable amount of time off work without pay to deal with certain unforeseen emergencies involving the employee's dependants and to make any necessary longer term arrangements.

### 7.1 Eligibility

The right to time off applies to all employees regardless of their length of service or whether their appointment is fixed term, temporary, casual or permanent.

### 7.2 Definition

A dependant for these purposes can be defined as including:

- Spouse: husband, wife, civil partner.
- Child: this means a child of any age.
- Parent: this includes stepparents.
- Grandparent
- Someone who lives in the same household: this includes partners or elderly relatives living with the employee but does not include an employee, tenant, lodger or boarder.

### 7.3 Circumstances under which an employee can take time off (not exhaustive)

If a dependant falls ill, has been injured or has been assaulted, or where an existing illness, injury or condition deteriorates.

- When a dependant is having a baby.
- To make long term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured, i.e. arranging a carer.
- To deal with the death of a dependant including time off to attend a funeral or make funeral arrangements. The Council has also made provision for paid time off in certain circumstances; please see the *Leave of Absence Policy* document for further information.
- To deal with the unforeseen breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant. This may be where the usual carer of the dependant fails to turn up as arranged.
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving an employee's child/grandchild during school hours.

### 7.4 Circumstances when leave cannot be taken

The leave should not be used in circumstances where the need to take leave could have been foreseen, in these circumstances annual leave should be used in the normal way. This leave is for the purpose of making immediate arrangements only. It is not in the spirit of the leave that it should be used for an extended period. It is expected that an employee will only need a maximum of 2-3 days leave as time off for dependants in order to make any necessary longer term arrangements. For additional periods, annual leave should be taken.

## 7.5 Procedure for applying

- 7.5.1 Employees are expected to follow the normal procedures that are in place within the Council for the reporting of sickness absence to report to their manager that it is their intention to take Unpaid Time Off for Dependants.
- 7.5.2 The employee should then submit their request for time off by completing the relevant leave request on the ceri system.

## 8. Parental Bereavement Leave

### 8.1 Parental bereavement leave

An employee who suffers the devastating loss of a child who is under the age of 18 will be entitled to 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave.

### 8.2 Definition

A 'parent' is a biological parent, adoptive parent (including a person with whom a child has been placed for adoption, so long as the adoption is not disrupted), an intended parent, anyone with whom the child has lived with and who has provided care for the child for a continuous period of 4 weeks ending with the date of death, or a partner of one of the aforementioned.

### 8.3 Eligibility

8.3.1 This leave will apply to any parent if they lose a child under the age of 18 or suffer a stillbirth from the 24th week of pregnancy, irrespective of their length of service with the Council.

8.3.2 The Council will pay the employee full pay during this period of leave.

8.3.3 The leave may be taken as a block of 2 weeks or 2 separate blocks of one week, which must be taken within 56 days beginning with the date of the child's death.

### 8.4 Application process

The employee should inform their line manager of their intention to take Parental Bereavement Leave as soon as possible and, ideally, notice will be given before the employee is due to start work on the first day of the leave. In cases where 2 separate blocks are taken, at least one weeks' notice must be given to take the second week. The employee should then submit their request for time off by completing the relevant leave request via Ceri Self-Service.

## 9. Neo-natal Leave

- 9.1 Any employee who has the main responsibility for caring for a baby who is admitted into hospital as a neonate (28 days old or less), if the admission lasts for a continuous period of 7 days or more, will be entitled to 12 weeks unpaid leave.
- 9.2 Entitlement to leave will be a day one employment right. The leave must be taken in a continuous block of one or more weeks.
- 9.3 As much notice as possible should be provided to line manager.

## 10. Invitro Fertilisation (IVF)

The Council recognises that fertility treatment is a stressful and emotionally demanding experience, and therefore wishes to support employees as much as possible when undergoing this procedure.

### 10.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for leave for fertility treatment, employees must have been continuously employed by the Council for 12 months or more. This includes part time, temporary and fixed term employees.

### 10.2 Entitlement

To support an employee undergoing treatment, the Council will grant up to 2 days paid leave, this will also be granted for partners of those undergoing the treatment, if needed. This provision is in addition to time off to attend hospital appointment. The days may be taken as a block or separately and may also be taken as half days or hours, as necessary around appointments. If an employee requires time off beyond the paid days, they should discuss with their manager the options available to them including taking unpaid leave. Paid time off is available for up to two cycles of IVF treatment.

### 10.3 Flexible working

Due to the nature of IVF and other fertility treatment it is recognised that there may be a requirement for flexibility in an individual's working pattern which should be discussed between the employee and line manager. Employees could utilise the range of flexible working options available. The Line Manager, in consultation with Occupational Health advice if necessary, will be responsible for considering, managing and approving the flexibility required by the individual, during and following any procedures.

### 10.4 Supportive Management Action

- 10.4.1 Where a manager is made aware that an employee is undergoing or likely to be undergoing treatment, they should ensure the employee concerned is supported and made aware of the provisions available.
- 10.4.2 It is recognised that anyone undergoing treatment may suffer from a range of side effects during and after the treatment has taken place. In these

circumstances if an employee goes on sick leave their absence will be managed in line with the Council's Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy.

10.4.3 Managers must maintain strict confidentiality around this matter, and will respect the dignity of the individual at all times during any treatment.

## 10.5 Application procedure

10.5.1 Employees should advise their manager that they require leave as soon as they are aware that they will be undergoing treatment.

10.5.2 Employees should try and have as many details about dates, etc available so that arrangements can be made to work around their treatment and the needs of the service.

10.5.3 Employees may be requested to provide their manager with confirmation of their treatment/appointments.

10.5.4 As far as is reasonably practicable, appointments should be made at times that will cause the least disruption to service delivery.

## 11. Carers' Leave

11.1 The Council has developed a comprehensive Carer's Policy that supports employees who have caring responsibilities to remain in work and fulfil their careers.

11.2 The policy outlines the range of flexible working options available to support carers alongside the development of a carers passport to help and support employees who have specific caring responsibilities.

11.3 Carers who hold a Carers Passport are able to claim up to five days paid Carers leave within any 12 month period.

11.4 Full details can be found in the Carers' Policy on [CeriNet](#).

## 12. Compassionate Leave

12.1 The Council recognises that employees have rights to paid time away from work and to acknowledge and support employees where there may be circumstances outside of an employees' control where compassionate leave may be more appropriate. The Council's Leave and Absence Policy outlines the provision for compassionate leave.

12.2 Full details can be found in the Leave and Absence Policy on [CeriNet](#).

## 13. Misuse of Entitlement

Any abuse of the scheme and entitlements within this Family Friendly Policy will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy. The following are examples of misuse:

- Taking leave under the policies for purposes other than the purpose they are intended for.
- Making a false statement as to entitlement to the schemes available within the policy, for example the age of the child, the relationship with the child or for parental leave the amount taken with a previous employer.
- Knowingly giving information to obtain leave that is subsequently found to be false.
- Failing to provide information requested to support an application



Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council

People & Organisation Service

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[cerinet.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://cerinet.ceredigion.gov.uk)

01970 633949

[humanresources@ceredigion.gov.uk](mailto:humanresources@ceredigion.gov.uk)



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**Ceredigion**

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County Council

# Leave and Absences Policy



People & Organisation Service  
January 2024



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW**  
**LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Ceredigion County Council (the Council) is committed to supporting employees to achieve a healthy balance between their work and personal commitments. The Council recognises that whilst employees have statutory entitlements to paid time away from work there may be circumstances outside of an employee's control where other leave may be more appropriate. In response to this, and in line with the Council's commitment to supporting employee health and wellbeing, the Council offers a range of additional paid and unpaid leave opportunities to employees.

1.2.2 This policy outlines employees' statutory leave entitlements as well as the additional leave entitlements offered by the Council.

## 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees other than those who are employed by School Governing Bodies

# 2 Annual Leave and Pay

## 2.1 Annual Leave Entitlement

2.1.1 The annual leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August for all employees.

2.1.2 Annual leave entitlement for full-time employees is as follows:

### **National Joint Council (NJC) and Soulbury**

<b>Period of Continuous Local Government Service</b>	<b>No of Hours (FTE)</b>	<b>No of Days (FTE)</b>
Less than 5 years' service	199.8 hours	27 days
5 to 10 years' service	229.4 hours	31 days
Over 10 years' service	251.6 hours	34 days

### **Chief Officers**

<b>Period of Continuous Local Government Service</b>	<b>No of Hours (FTE)</b>	<b>No of Days (FTE)</b>
Less than 10 years' service	244.2 hours	33 days
Over 10 years' service	266.4 hours	36 days

- 2.1.3 Annual leave entitlement (including public holidays) is pro-rata for part time employees.
- 2.1.4 Where the service qualifying commencement date falls before 1st March the full additional entitlement will be applied for that leave year. If the qualifying commencement date falls on or after 1st March half the additional entitlement will be applied for that leave year. Additional entitlement for length of service will be pro rata to the contracted hours and weeks worked.
- 2.1.5 In order to meet the requirements of Working Time Legislation a minimum of 207.2 hours (28 FTE days) holidays (including public holidays) must be taken each annual leave year. This figure is pro-rata for part time employees.

## 2.2 Carry over of annual leave

- 2.2.1 Up to 37 hours (5 FTE days) of your annual entitlement can be carried forward into the next annual leave year. This figure is pro-rata for part time employees.
- 2.2.2 In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to carry forward in excess of 37 hours, subject to the prior approval of the Corporate Director. Applications to carry over additional leave should be submitted, using the appropriate form, within the advertised by application window each year.
- 2.2.3 The carry forward of leave in exceptional circumstances is subject to the requirement of the working time regulations, i.e. that all employees must take the minimum of 207.2 hours (28 FTE days) holidays (including bank holidays) as detailed above.

## 2.3 Applications for annual leave

- 2.3.1 All annual leave dates must be approved in advance by the employee's line manager.
- 2.3.2 To ensure adequate staffing coverage employees should provide as much notice as possible of proposed annual leave dates. Such notice should normally be at least twice the number of annual leave days that the employee wishes to take. It is however accepted that this may not be possible in all cases.
- 2.3.3 Employees submit applications for annual leave via Ceri Self-Service.
- 2.3.4 Line managers reserve the right to request employees to take their annual leave and will, if required, designate annual leave dates on behalf of employees. Where this is necessary, sufficient notice will be given to the employee which will be at least twice the number of annual leave days that the employee is required to take. Line managers may also request employees take a certain number of days within a given period, such as, 8 days in first four months of the year.

## 2.4 Pay in lieu of annual leave

2.4.1 There will be no payment in lieu of any untaken annual leave (except in exceptional circumstances on termination as indicated below).

2.4.2 Holiday pay for relief workers will be calculated in arrears on a monthly basis.

## 2.5 Holiday entitlement in year of commencement

If the employee joins Ceredigion County Council part way through a holiday year, they will be entitled to a proportion of their annual leave and any bank holiday (pro rata where necessary) that fall during their remaining leave year.

## 2.6 Holiday Pay on Termination of Employment

2.6.1 If the employee leaves Ceredigion County Council's employment part way through an annual leave year, they will be entitled to any accrued annual leave up until the date of termination. Arrangements should be made to take this entitlement before the date of termination. Payment in lieu of annual leave will only be made in very exceptional circumstances (usually no more than 5 days).

2.6.2 If, on the employee's date of termination, they have taken paid annual leave in excess of earned entitlement, they will be required to reimburse the Council (by means of deduction from salary if necessary) in respect of such holiday.

2.6.3 No payment in lieu of accrued contractual annual leave will be made to the employee (and where appropriate a deduction will be made from salary) in the event of their termination for gross misconduct or in the event of the employee giving inadequate notice of termination or leaving before the contractual notice period has expired. Contractual holiday for these purposes means all and any leave entitlement provided for in the employee's contract that is over and above the minimum statutory leave period provided for in the Working Time Regulations 1998 (i.e. 5.6 weeks or a maximum of 28 days).

## 2.7 Annual Leave and Bank Holiday whilst on Maternity/Adoption Leave

2.7.1 An employee will still receive their annual leave entitlement whilst they are on maternity leave and they may choose to use it to extend the time they have off after their paid maternity period ends or to take it before the start of their paid maternity leave.

2.7.2 Employees are encouraged, where possible, to take any annual leave prior to commencing maternity leave. Should it not be possible to take all annual leave prior to commencing maternity leave then any carried over leave would need to be taken before the employee returns to work, i.e. immediately following the end of their maternity leave.

2.7.3 An employee will be entitled to time off in lieu for any bank holidays that occur on the days that they are contracted to work whilst they are on maternity leave.

2.7.4 Further information on leave entitlements when on maternity (including entitlements for centrally employed teachers) is available within the Council's Family Leave and Support Policy and on [CeriNet](#).

## 2.8 Sickness whilst on annual leave

2.8.1 Where an employee falls ill or becomes injured while on annual leave, they are entitled to claim sick absence and re-schedule their accrued annual leave for a later time, subject to the following conditions being met: the total period of sickness absence must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner.

- The employee must contact their Line Manager by telephone, on the first day of any known period of sickness absence during annual leave.
- The employee must submit a written request no later than 5 working days after returning to work setting out how much of the annual leave period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.
- Where the employee is overseas when he/she falls ill or is injured, evidence must still be produced that the employee was ill by way of either a medical certificate or proof of a claim on an insurance policy for medical treatment received at the overseas location.
- All costs of medical certification are to be incurred by the employee.

2.8.2 Where the employee fulfils all the above conditions, the Council will grant the employee the same number of days' replacement annual leave in the current leave year as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury. The replacement leave must be taken in the employee's current leave year wherever practicable.

2.8.3 Where carry over of leave is necessary due to the granting of replacement annual leave, only the statutory element of any untaken leave may be carried over (with statutory annual leave being assumed to have been taken first in any leave year).

2.8.4 If an employee is ill or is injured before commencing a period of planned annual leave, and as a result have had to cancel their arrangements, the Council will agree to the employee postponing the annual leave dates to another mutually agreed time (in that leave year whenever possible). Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy. The employee must submit a written request to postpone the planned annual leave and this must be accompanied by a letter from his/her doctor confirming that he/she is unfit, or is still likely to be unfit, to take the holiday.

2.8.5 An employee must request to take any replacement annual leave in accordance with the Council's standard annual leave procedure and should endeavour to take

the replacement annual leave in the same leave year in which it was accrued. However, where an employee has good reason for not being able to do so, the Council will allow the employee to carry the statutory element of any untaken leave forward into the next holiday year. The Council may require an employee to take all or part of his/her replacement annual leave on particular days. At least the minimum notice period under the Working Time Directive will be provided in such cases (twice the number of days' notice of the period of leave).

## 2.9 Holiday entitlement whilst on suspension

If an employee is on suspension, the Council may require the employee to take any accrued annual leave during his/her current leave year. The usual authorisation from the line manager and notice periods will apply.

## 2.10 Taking holidays whilst on sick leave

2.10.1 The Council recognises that employees who are absent for reasons of sickness may in certain circumstances find it beneficial to take a holiday. In this case the Council will support this need provided that the employee takes their accrued annual leave for those periods

2.10.2 An employee on sick leave may apply in the normal way to take their accrued annual leave entitlement while on sick leave. The holiday dates must be approved in accordance with this policy. This will not impact on the employee's overall entitlement to sick leave.

2.10.3 Employees on paid or unpaid sick leave who travel for holidays or other purposes should be aware that if they do something inconsistent with their stated reasons for sickness absence or something that worsens their illness or prolongs their absence, the Council reserves the right to stop statutory sick pay and/or occupational sick pay, and in some cases this could result in disciplinary action.

## 2.11 Holiday entitlement and long-term sick leave

2.11.1 Where the employee returns to work following long term sick absence, any outstanding statutory leave entitlement accrued should be taken in the same leave year where practicable. The Council may require an employee to take all or part of his/her accrued holiday on particular days as indicated above.

2.12.2 Where the employee is absent for the whole leave year or there is insufficient time for accrued statutory leave to be taken in the same year, the employee will be permitted to carry forward the statutory element of any accrued leave to the next leave year, subject to a maximum of four weeks leave (i.e. 20 days for a full time employee, pro rata for a part time employee). Any leave carried over must be taken in the following year and the Council may require an employee to take all or part of his/her accrued holiday on specified days.

## 2.12 Annual leave for phased returns to work after long-term sickness absence

2.12.1 Phased returns are used for a variety of reasons when someone has been off sick and may last for different lengths of time depending on the individual's reasons for absence. The normal period of phased return will be up to four weeks. Please refer to the Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy for further details on phased return.

2.12.2 When advised by the employee's GP or other medical practitioner that there should be a phased return following long term sickness this will be managed according to the individual and their particular circumstances. It is recognised that it is not appropriate to require employees to use their annual leave during this time. However, the employee and the Council may agree that accrued annual leave could be used to arrange a period of part time working at the end of the period of phased return.



### 3. Public and Bank Holidays

3.1.1 Ceredigion County Council recognises the following eight public/bank holidays each year:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Early May bank holiday
- Spring bank holiday
- Summer bank holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

3.1.2 All recognised public and bank holidays are permitted as paid leave in addition to the annual leave entitlement specified in Section 1 above.

3.1.3 Public and bank holiday entitlement is pro-rata for part time employees.

3.1.4 Certain employees may be required to work on recognised public and bank holidays. Payment for working on such days and/or arrangements for time off in lieu are in accordance with their specific terms and conditions of employment.

## 4. Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)

### 4.1 What is TOIL?

TOIL is time taken as additional leave instead of overtime pay by employees working beyond their contractual or standard working hours to meet operational demands.

### 4.2 Application of TOIL

4.2.1 TOIL is not intended to replace overtime payments or the flexi-time scheme.

4.2.2 TOIL must be requested and authorised in advance by the line manager. If this is not the case, any TOIL accrued by the employee will be lost.

4.2.3 All TOIL should be recorded on the corporate TOIL form and made available for the line manager to view.

4.2.4 Employees who access the flexi-time scheme may only accrue TOIL when additional hours are worked outside the bandwidth of the flexi-time scheme.

4.2.5 The Council does not encourage employees to work excessive hours. Under the Council's Flexible Working Policy, a maximum of 12 hours (including flexi-time, over-time and/or TOIL) should be worked on any normal working day. Further, managers should ensure working hours do not exceed those stipulated by the Working Time Regulations.

### 4.3 Using TOIL

4.3.1 TOIL will be based on plain time only, irrespective of the day worked. Employees will be allowed time off with pay equivalent to the number of hours worked.

4.3.2 TOIL should be taken as soon as is reasonably possible after it has been accrued and within a maximum of 8 weeks.

4.3.3 All requests to take TOIL should be recorded on Ceri Self-Service and must be authorised by the line manager.

### 4.4 Exemptions

4.4.1 Employees who choose to work outside of standard working hours through personal choice cannot accrue TOIL.

4.4.2 TOIL should not be accrued on a regular basis.

4.4.3 If employees are routinely expected to start or finish work outside of their standard working hours an alternative solution should be considered.

3.4.4 Excess hours accrued under the flexi-time scheme may not be transferred to TOIL or vice-versa.

3.4.5 Employees leaving the Council should ensure they have taken any remaining TOIL prior to the termination of their employment.

## 5. Special Leave

### 5.1 Background

5.1.1 The Council recognises that there are occasions when a short period of time off is necessary outside of leave entitlement and will endeavour to support employees in balancing their work and personal circumstances.

5.1.2 Requests for special leave will be considered sympathetically in light of the individual circumstances. It is important for employees to consider the needs of the Council and to make every effort to make alternative arrangements wherever possible.

5.1.3 Requests for Special Leave must be made through Ceri Self-Service.

### 5.2 Unpaid leave

5.2.1 It is recognised that for various reasons employees may request additional time off over and above their annual leave entitlement. Consideration for such unpaid time up to a maximum of 6 months will only be made according to the needs of the Service and the employee's annual leave entitlement.

5.2.2 Applications should be made in writing to the Corporate Lead Officer. This includes employees who work term time only.

5.2.3 Employees applying for a period of unpaid leave greater one month must have a minimum of 12 months service with Ceredigion County Council at the time that they wish to take the period of unpaid leave.

### 5.3 Compassionate Leave

<b>Type</b>		<b>Maximum Entitlement</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Approval by</b>
i.	Serious illness (life threatening)	Up to five days leave with pay for the serious illness of an immediate family member	Parent, spouse, partner or child or relative who depends on the employee for care	Corporate Lead Officer
ii.	Bereavement	Up to seven days leave with pay on the death of a close family member, to include 1 day to attend the funeral	Child Grandchild Next of kin or nominated next of kin. Spouse, partner, civil partner, Parent including stepparents, Grandparents,	Corporate Lead Officer

			Brother or sister – including stepbrother/sister. Parent of spouse / partner / civil partner/.	
	Bereavement	Up to 1 days leave to attend the funeral of close family member as indicated (that is not included in the above provision)	In-laws (e.g. sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law) Aunt / Uncle / Cousin / Nephew / Niece (this provision excludes second cousins, great aunts etc)	Corporate Lead Officer
iii.	Unpaid leave	A maximum of 12 weeks unpaid leave following the serious illness or death of an immediate family member	Parent, spouse, partner or child or relative who depends on the employee for care	Corporate Lead Officer

## 5.4 Health and Wellbeing

5.4.1 There is no right to paid time off to attend planned doctor, dentist or hospital appointments however the Council recognises the value of encouraging employees to maintain their health and wellbeing .

5.4.2 It is expected that appointments are attended outside of standard working hours and in an employee's own time however where this is not possible paid appointment allowances are as follows:

Type		Entitlement	Authorised by
i.	Medical Appointments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor</li> <li>• Dentist</li> <li>• Optician</li> </ul>	Employees should try and make appointments outside their normal working hours wherever possible if this is not possible then the following paid time will apply: Doctor – up to 2 hours Dentist – up to 2 hours, twice a year Optician – up to 1 hour, once a year	Line Manager
ii.	Hospital outpatient	Hospital outpatient appointments and travel time will be as paid time on production of an appointment letter. For appointments outside of Ceredigion the maximum time claimed must not exceed an employee's standard working day.	Line Manager

iii.	Cancer screening	Time off for cancer screening e.g. cervical, mammogram and prostate will be with pay. Employees should however strive to accommodate such appointments outside working hours.	Line Manager
iv.	Occupational Health	Time off with pay will be granted for employees to meet virtually or attend occupational health appointments arranged by the Council	Line Manager
v.	Blood donation	Up to 90 mins time off with pay will be granted for the purpose of donating blood. Employees should make arrangements outside of working hours wherever possible.	Line Manager
vi.	Physiotherapy/ Rehabilitation	Reasonable time off with pay will be granted for the purpose of attending one course of physiotherapy or rehabilitation session/s	Line Manager
vii.	Ante-natal appointments	Refer to Family Leave and Support Policy	

5.4.3 Approval must be sought from the line manager prior to attending any appointments and evidence of the appointment provided.

5.4.4 Discretion and confidentiality must be maintained by Line Managers when information regarding health issues is shared by employees.

## 5.5 Time off for public duties

5.5.1 Paid time off will be granted for public duties. The full classification of public duties can be found at Direct Gov ([Time off work for public duties - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))

Type	Maximum entitlement	Authorised by
i. Magistrate	Employees undertaking magistrates' duties will be granted up to <b>15</b> contractual days per annum with pay	Corporate Lead Officer
ii. Members of Local Authorities	Members of a unitary local authority are allowed <b>18</b> days/36 half days leave each year.	Corporate Lead Officer
iii. Governing Bodies	School Governors are allowed up to <b>5</b> working days per annum to attend School Governing Body meetings	Corporate Lead Officer
iv. Jury Service	Leave with pay will be granted subject to the employee reimbursing to the Council their claim for loss of earnings.	Corporate Manager must ensure that the absence is

		Employees will receive a loss of earnings form from the Court and must forward this to the Pay and Benefits Section in People & Organisation <u>before</u> attending jury service	recorded on the Ceri system
v.	Regular or Volunteer Reserves	Up to <b>10</b> days paid leave to attend annual training.	Corporate Lead Officer

5.5.2 The maximum individual entitlement for paid time off for public duties (excluding jury service) will be 30 contractual days per annum (pro-rata for part time employees).

5.5.3 Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings the employee must claim and pay the allowance to the Council.

## 5.6 Other Special Leave

Type	Maximum entitlement	Authorised by
i. Emergency & Rescue Services	Time off will be granted with pay for a maximum of 10 days to attend call outs during working hours. Employees must ensure adequate cover prior to attending the emergency call out otherwise payment will be withheld.	Corporate Lead Officer
ii. Special leave for employees to represent the Country at sporting, events	Applications for special leave for representation of sport, charitable or other events at a National level up to 5 days with pay.	Corporate Lead Officer
iii. Participation in election as a candidate –UK Parliament, the Welsh Government or a Unitary Authority.	Leave without pay may be granted from the date of the valid nomination to the date of the poll. (The same provisions would apply to an employee who acts as an official agent of a candidate at the elections indicated).	Corporate Lead Officer
iv. Participation in election duties	Leave with pay will be granted to those staff who need to be away from their job during normal working hours to undertake election work. This includes polling day duties and count duties, and any consequential training/briefing sessions. Staff will be entitled to be paid for the additional polling day and count duties.	Line Manager
v. Foster Carer Leave	5 days paid leave to attend training/ home assessment/ foster panels per placement	Line Manager
vi. Time off for interviews	Reasonable time off with pay to attend interviews for positions within Ceredigion Council. Employees must take annual	Line Manager

		leave to attend interviews with other employers including local authorities except in times of organisational change where an individual may be 'at risk' of redundancy (and has received formal notice to this effect). In this circumstance, the employee would need to have at least one years' service to receive paid time off to attend interviews.	
vii	Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance as an officer as part of their paid employment – leave with pay.</li> <li>• Attendance as a witness for the police – leave with pay subject to the reimbursement of any allowance received by the employee.</li> <li>• Attendance in all other cases – leave without pay</li> </ul>	Line Manager

## 5.7 Carers' Leave

The Council has developed a comprehensive Carer's Policy that supports employees who have caring responsibilities to remain in work and fulfil their careers.

The policy outlines the range of flexible working options available to support carers alongside the development of a carers passport to help and support employees who have specific caring responsibilities.

Carers who hold a Carers passport are able to claim up to five days paid Carers leave within any 12 month period.

Full details can be found in the Carers' Policy on [CeriNet](#).

## 5.8 Flexi-time Leave

The Council operates a discretionary flexi-time scheme where eligible employees can vary working hours and take any excess hours accrued as flexi leave.. Full details of the flexi-time scheme are included in the Council's Flexible Working Policy on [CeriNet](#).

## 5.9 Misuse of The Entitlement

Any abuse of the entitlements within this policy will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy. The following are examples of misuse:

- Taking leave under the policies for purposes other than the purpose they are intended for.
- Making a false statement as to entitlement to the leave available within the policy,



- Knowingly giving information to obtain leave that is subsequently found to be false.



Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council

People & Organisation Service

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Caru·Love  
**Ceredigion**



Cyngor Sir  
**CEREDIGION**  
County Council

# Flexible Working Policy



People & Organisation Service  
January 2024



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW**  
**LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Our Workforce Plan 2023-2028 sets out how we will attract, develop and retain our most valuable asset – our people. The effectiveness of our organisation hinges not just on attracting the best talent, but also in creating an inclusive culture that supports its people and recognises the unique attributes and needs of every Team Ceredigion member.

1.2.2 The Council recognises that taking a flexible approach to how, where and when work is carried out is a key enabler to achieving this. Flexible working allows people to balance their work commitments with their responsibilities and interests outside of work. This can aid health and wellbeing, reduce turnover, increase motivation and talent attraction, and ultimately can lead to better outcomes for our service users.

1.2.3 In line with this, we are committed to promoting flexibility, recognising that flexible working can provide benefits to both our people and our organisation. Whilst the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 affords all employees with a statutory right to request flexible working, this policy reflects the Council's ambition of establishing a culture where we encourage a 'yes by default' approach to flexible working where service needs can be met. As such, all suitable roles within the Council will by default have access to the Council's flexi time scheme and hybrid working offer.

## 1.2 Aims

This Policy aims to:

- confirm the commitment of the Council to maximising the availability of a range of flexible-working arrangements.
- ensure standards or service delivery is not negatively impacted by any flexible working arrangements.
- describe the types of flexible working arrangements and the process by which staff may request them.
- ensure all statutory flexible working requests are dealt with in compliance with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023

## 1.3 Scope

The policy applies to all Council employees but excludes those on relief contracts or employed under the delegated powers of School Governing Bodies.

## 1.4 What is flexible working?

1.4.1 Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

1.4.2 There are some informal arrangements which have no impact on contractual terms or minimal impact on service delivery. These can be one off, temporary or ad-hoc in nature such as swapping shifts or altering start and finish times under the flexi-time scheme. Informal arrangements such as these can be agreed between the employee and their line manager and do not necessitate a statutory flexible working request.

## 1.5 Types of flexible working

The following are examples of flexible working arrangements. It is recognised that there may be alternatives or a combination of arrangements which are suitable to both the Council and the employee:

- Part-time working
- Term-time working
- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Flexi-time
- Hybrid Working
- Job-sharing

Further information on the types of flexible working can be found on CeriNet.

## 2. Flexi-time Scheme

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The flexi-time scheme is a discretionary, informal work arrangement, that allows eligible employees to vary their working hours within certain limits. There is no contractual right to flexi-time.
- 2.2 The scheme is offered with the intention of providing a degree of flexibility for employees and for the Council. This can help employees achieve a healthy work-life balance whilst the Council can benefit from a wider time span of service delivery, as well as increased employee retention and productivity.

### 2.2 Eligibility

- 2.2.1 The scheme will apply to all employees apart from those work a shift rota, set hours or are employed under chief officer terms and conditions.
- 2.2.2 Where it is not possible for employees to participate in the scheme, this will be confirmed by their Corporate Manager.

### 2.3 Principles

- 2.3.1 The scheme is based upon trust and positive working relationships within teams to ensure effective service delivery.
- 2.3.2 The overriding principle with regards to the operation of the scheme is business need. Flexi time does not imply an automatic right to accumulate credit hours. Employees do not, for example, have the right to work early and stay late irrespective of whether work is available.
- 2.3.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that the working patterns of employees do not compromise their health.

### 2.4 Responsibilities

#### **Managers**

- 2.4.1 Manager must ensure the needs of the service always have priority and that services are adequately staffed throughout standard office hours.
- 2.4.2 The Council must comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations. In line with this, managers should ensure employees accessing the scheme do not exceed reasonable working hours.

#### **Employees**

- 2.4.3 As there are no specific core times, all employees must arrange, within their own teams and following approval of their manager, start and finish times to ensure adequate service cover. Periodically, there will be a need to change such arrangements owing to staff absences such as annual leave, sickness etc.
- 2.4.4 To ensure service delivery is maintained, employees should communicate their working hours to colleagues, ensure their calendars are shared appropriately, and use 'out of office' facilities on email and voicemail whilst away from office.



## 2.5 Standard Working Week

The standard working week is 37 hours, with the following working pattern:

- Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5.00pm
- Friday: 8.45am to 4.30pm

A 45 minute, unpaid lunch break should be taken between the hours of 12pm and 2pm.

## 2.6 Flexi-time hours – Bandwidth

2.6.1 For employees accessing the flexi-time scheme, the working hours bandwidth may be extended so that work can be undertaken between the hours of 7.30am to 7.00pm.

2.6.2 Where an employee is requested by management to work outside of this bandwidth, then this will be on a Time off in Lieu (TOIL) basis or otherwise overtime where TOIL is not practicable. TOIL will only be awarded with prior line management approval. Please see the Leave and Absence Policy.

## 2.7 Standard Working Day

To record adjustments such as leave, sickness, or other authorised absence, the standard working day for employees who are contracted to work 37 hours a week will be 7 hours and 24 minutes (half day = 3 hours and 42 minutes).

## 2.8 Minimum and Maximum Working Day

2.8.1 A minimum of 4 hours must be worked on each standard working day (pro rata for part time employees).

2.8.2 To protect employee welfare, a maximum of 12 hours (including over-time or TOIL) can be worked on any working day. Emergency situations may result in this maximum being exceeded on rare occasions.

## 2.9 Lunch breaks

Employees working more than 6 hours in a working day must take at least a 30-minute unpaid break.

## 2.10 Accounting period

The scheme operates on a four-week accounting period. By the end of the accounting period, employees are expected to have reconciled their actual hours worked with their contractual hours. This would be 148 hours over the 4 week accounting period for full-time employees (pro-rata for part time).

## 2.11 Credit hours

2.11.1 During an accounting period, employees who have accumulated excess hours beyond their contractual hours can accrue and carry forward these excess hours as credit hours or take them as flexi leave.

2.11.2 There is no automatic right to accumulate credit hours. It is not acceptable for an employee to accumulate time if they have no extra work to do or are not contributing anything of extra value to the Council.

2.11.3 A maximum of 8 hours credit can be carried over from one accounting period to the next. This will be pro-rata for part-time employees. Any excess hours exceeding 8 hours will be lost.

2.11.3 If an employee is consistently exceeding the credit hours limit, the manager should investigate and if necessary, review the employee's workload and working methods.

## 2.12 Debit hours

2.12.1 No more than 4 hours debit (pro-rata for part-time employees) should be accrued per accounting period without reasonable prior arrangement.

2.12.2 An employee in debit is required to make up the deficit by the end of the next accounting period.

2.12.3 Where an employee cannot make up the deficit, the employee should balance their hours using annual leave or unpaid leave.

2.12.4 Where employees persistently exceed the debit allowance, action such as withdrawal of the scheme or in exceptional circumstances disciplinary action may be considered. At all times HR advice should be sought.

## 2.13 Flexi Leave

2.13.1 Subject to line management approval, credit hours can be used to take flexi leave. Employees can request up to 1 full working day's flexi leave (or 2 half days) per accounting period.

2.13.2 Flexi-leave should only be granted if:

- sufficient credit hours have been accrued.
- service delivery will not be compromised.

## 2.14 Recording hours of work

2.14.1 All employees participating in the scheme must record their working hours on the Council's flexi form, which is available to download from CeriNet.

2.14.2 Any absences or breaks taken during the working day, including smoking or vaping breaks, must be recorded.

2.14.3 Times recorded on flexi forms must be entered as soon as possible and should never be entered in advance. No member of staff will complete a flexi form on behalf of another.

2.14.4 The flexi form must be made available to the line manager so that it can be monitored and checked at the end of each accounting period.

2.14.5 It is important to note that, any employee who falsifies a time recording document, whether it be flexi form or time sheet, will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. Such falsification will be regarded as gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

## 2.15 Recording of authorised absence

- 2.15.1 **Sickness or Annual Leave:** All sickness and/or annual leave should be recorded on the flexi form. A ½ day will count as 3 hours 42 minutes and a full day as 7 hours 24 minutes (pro rata for part time employees).
- 2.15.2 **Training Leave:** The maximum number of hours that can be credited for attendance on a college course, other training course or conference is 7 hour 24 minutes. No allowances will be made above that of a standard full time working day in consideration of either attendance or travelling time.
- 2.15.3 **Study Leave:** Please refer to the Learning & Development Policy for guidance on study leave entitlement.
- 2.15.4 **Appointments:** It is expected that appointments are attended outside of standard working hours, in an employee's own time. Where this is not possible any paid appointment allowances will be listed in the Leave of Absence Policy.

## 2.16 Suspension or Withdrawal of the Flexi-time Scheme

Provision of the flexi-time scheme is discretionary and as such the scheme may be suspended or withdrawn at any time. The following are reasons which are likely to result in suspension or withdrawal:

- due to service need
- where an employee is finding it difficult to manage their time under the scheme.
- where an employee fails to follow the procedural requirements set out in this policy
- where an employee is found to be misusing the scheme

## 2.17 Leaving the Council

- 2.17.1 When an employee leaves the Council, they should reduce any credited hours to zero prior to their last day. Any remaining credit will be lost.
- 2.17.2 In participating in the Flexi-time scheme, employees agree that any hours in debit at their leaving date will be deducted from their final salary.

## 3. Hybrid Working Scheme

### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Hybrid Working scheme is a discretionary, informal work arrangement, offered to all employees occupying eligible roles.
- 3.1.2 The scheme is offered with the intention of helping employees improve their work life balance by reducing commuting time whilst also reducing the Council's carbon footprint and broadening its talent pool.

### 3.2 Principles

- 3.2.1 The availability and extent of hybrid working will depend upon service demands, requirements of the role as well as the personal circumstances of the individual employee.
- 3.2.2 Any arrangement must not impact detrimentally on the quality and continuity of service provision in any of the Council's functions and activities. The needs of the service must be the over-riding priority when considering any hybrid working arrangement.
- 3.2.3. The contractual work location of all employees regardless of whether they have gained hybrid working status, will be a Council building. This will be noted on their contract of employment.
- 3.2.4 As working in a hybrid way is a voluntary, discretionary benefit, employees will not be eligible to claim expenses for hybrid working.

### 3.3 Work Styles

- 3.3.1 To assist with the identification of roles which may or may not be eligible for hybrid working the Council has identified three work styles:
- **Fixed:** A role where the employee's place of work is determined by their role (e.g. Library Assistant, Environmental Operative, Receptionist, Library Assistant, Caretaker, Care Assistant).
  - **Hybrid:** A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace but due to certain responsibilities/client demand the employee will be required to visit Council buildings or schools on a regular basis with little notice (e.g. Social Worker, Planning Control Officer, HR Officer).
  - **Remote:** A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace.
- 3.3.2 Work style categorisation will be the responsibility of the Corporate Manager subject to approval from the relevant Corporate Lead Officer. Role categorisation will be monitored by the People and Organisation Service.

### 3.4 Requesting or Declining Hybrid Working Status

3.4.1 All employees commencing a hybrid eligible role must complete a 'Hybrid Status Form' (available on dodl) to confirm whether they wish to request or decline the offer of hybrid working.

#### **Declining Hybrid Working Status**

3.4.2 When an employee declines hybrid working status via the Hybrid Working Status form it will be sent to the Line Manager for information. The Line Manager must contact Property Services to arrange a dedicated workspace for the employee in their contractual work location.

3.4.3 Employees who do not have hybrid working status, may not work from home.

#### **Requesting Hybrid Working Status**

3.4.4 Employees can only make 2 hybrid working status requests per position, per year, in line with Flexible Working employment legislation.

3.4.5 When an employee requests hybrid working it is sent to their Line Manager for approval.

3.4.6 When considering a request Line Managers should ensure the employee has confirmed that:

- they have a suitable workspace to efficiently and safely undertake their role;
- their workspace can accommodate the ICT equipment needed to efficiently undertake their role. In most roles, this will include space for 2 monitors/screens.
- they have sufficient internet speeds to access systems and attend virtual meetings whilst sharing their cameras. As a guideline, a guaranteed minimum internet download speed of 8Mbps should suffice.
- they can ensure data and information is kept secure whilst working remotely.

### 3.5 Denying Hybrid Working Status

3.5.1 Where a Line Manager decides to deny a Hybrid Working Status request, they should discuss this with the employee. They must then contact Property Services to arrange a dedicated workspace for the employee in their contractual work location.

3.5.2 Where a hybrid working application has been denied by the Line Manager, employees can submit an appeal. Please see section 4.11 for details.

### 3.6 Withdrawal of Hybrid Working Status

#### **By the employee**

3.6.1 Employees may decide at any time that they no longer wish to work in a hybrid way and would prefer to work in a fixed office. In this event, employees should complete a new 'Hybrid Working Status Form' where they 'decline' to work in a hybrid way.

3.6.2 Depending on logistical considerations, there may be a delay in providing a dedicated workspace.

## **By the employer**

3.6.3 The following are reasons why hybrid working status may be withdrawn from an employee (this list is not exhaustive):

- Work circumstances: e.g. work location, changes in technology or other service reasons that result in hybrid working no longer being viable.
- Employee health: Where concerns arise that employee health is being negatively affected it may be necessary to withdraw hybrid working, either temporarily or permanently, following advice and guidance in an occupational health report.
- Disciplinary reasons: If hybrid working is withdrawn as a result of a disciplinary concern which relates to hybrid working, then the provisions of the Council's agreed Disciplinary Procedure will apply and no notice may be given. The right of appeal against such a decision is provided within the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Capability reasons: Where there is concern about the capability of the employee hybrid working may be temporarily suspended to enable the Line Manager to provide further training/evaluation at the workplace. Where capability concerns persist hybrid working may be permanently withdrawn.
- Change of address: There is no automatic right to continue hybrid working at a new address. Employees must report a change in address to their Line Manager in order that they may determine whether the new address is suitable for home working.
- Change of post: There is no automatic right to continue hybrid working in the event of a change of post. Continuation of hybrid working will be in agreement with the new Line Manager subject to the standard application assessment.

3.6.4 Withdrawal of hybrid working must be with agreement of the relevant Corporate Manager, in consultation with a Human Resources Officer.

3.6.5 The employee will be given a reasonable period of notice (approx. 4 weeks) to make any necessary arrangements.

## **3.7 Attendance at the workplace**

3.7.1 An employee who has gained hybrid working status:

- can choose whether they work at home or in the workplace on any given day, subject to the needs of the service.
- will be required to attend the workplace as and when their Line Manager deems necessary. In all but exceptional circumstances, reasonable notice (minimum 24 hours) should be provided.
- will not have a dedicated workspace in any workplace and will instead have use of hot desk available on the desk booking system. All hot desk use should be recorded using the desk booking system.

## **3.8 Loss of connectivity**

3.8.1 If an employee working away from the workplace, experiences connectivity issues which they have been unable to resolve within 30 minutes they must inform their Line Manager. The Line Manager must determine whether the employee can continue working productively without a connection or whether the disruption in connectivity is such that the employee is required to attend a Council building to ensure continuity of work.

3.8.2 Travel time to a council building to resume work will not be classed as working time nor will it be classed as a business-related journey for the purposes of claiming mileage expenses.

3.8.3 Depending on the circumstances, employees who are unable to ensure the continuity of work may be required to record a break in working time under the Council's flexi-scheme arrangements or alternatively take Annual Leave or Flexi Leave.

### 3.9 Childcare and Caring Responsibilities

3.9.1 The ability to work from home or alternative location is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. As with all Council employees, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place to avoid conflict with work performance.

3.9.2 Reference should be made to the following policies, which offer options and support to staff in such circumstances:

- Family Leave and Support Policy
- Leave and Absences Policy
- Carer's Policy

### 3.10 Travelling

3.10.1 In line with existing business travel arrangements, the commute between home and the contractual work location will not attract travel allowances. Business-related journeys will be claimable when employees deviate from their usual home to work journey.

3.10.2 Journeys to attend team meetings located at other Council buildings will not be classed as business-related journeys unless the employee has been directed to undertake the journey by their line manager. With the aim of reducing travel time and carbon emissions, every effort should be made to hold the majority of team meetings virtually.

3.10.3 To meet our commitment of reducing our carbon footprint, employees will attend out of county meetings virtually. Where this is not possible out of county travel must be approved by their Corporate Director.

### 3.11 Locations when working remotely

3.11.1 The expectation will be that employees with hybrid working status will only undertake work remotely from their home address or any other address included in their Hybrid Status Application.

3.11.2 There may be occasions where employees wish to work from an alternative location for short durations, e.g. one working day. This may be done with prior agreement from their Line Manager.

3.11.3 There may be occasions where employees wish to work from an alternative location for extended periods e.g. one week or more. In this circumstance, a new 'Hybrid Status Form' must be completed and approved.

### 3.12 Communication and contact

- 3.12.1 Hybrid status employees should be contactable for the duration of their agreed working hours. An employee's Skype status should not be placed to 'Do Not Disturb' without prior agreement from their line manager.
- 3.12.2 Employees must keep their Outlook calendar up to date and provide their line manager with review access.
- 3.12.3 In line with our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint, as well as reduce travelling expenses, internal meetings will be held virtually by default.
- 3.12.4 To replicate in-person meetings employees must have cameras on for all virtual meetings. Employees are expected to be dressed as you would when attending the office.
- 3.12.5 When attending virtual meetings with partners and service users, employees must apply a corporate background (available from Ceri Net).
- 3.12.6 Employees must not, under any circumstances, give details of their home address or telephone number to clients/customers or third parties. An employee's home must never be used for the purpose of holding work related in-person meetings and external mail should always be directed to Council offices and not to the employee's home address.

### 3.13 Equipment

#### **ICT Equipment**

- 3.13.1 In line with recommendations made by the ICT Service, our hybrid status employees will be provided with the necessary ICT equipment to work efficiently remotely. Employees will need to accommodate the recommended equipment in their home.
- 3.13.2 Requests for ICT equipment over and above the standard recommendation will be subject to approval by the ICT Service. There may be occasions where additional equipment is recommended following medical and/or health and safety advice. Approval will be subject to consultation with the People and Organisation Service and the employing service.

#### **Workstation Equipment**

- 3.13.3 In most circumstances, employees must use their own workstation furniture e.g. desks, chairs. These must be compliant with health and safety requirements as identified in the Council's DSE Assessment.
- 3.13.4 Additional workstation equipment may be provided to an individual should a workstation DSE Assessment deem this necessary or due to the requirements of the role.
- 3.13.5 Additional equipment may also be provided for staff who require reasonable adjustments as determined by occupational health.
- 3.13.6 In most circumstances, and in addition to their home workstation set up, equipment will be provided at the place where they indicate that they predominantly work and not across multiple sites.



### 3.14 Health and Safety

- 3.14.1 In addition to the employer's statutory duty of care, employees have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others while they are carrying out work activities, regardless of the work location.
- 3.14.2 Hybrid status employees will have the same health and safety duties as other employees and will be required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst working from home.
- 3.14.3 Employees must report to their line manager any work-related incident, accident or near miss which has occurred at home, in line with current arrangements.
- 3.14.4 A DSE Assessment will be carried out by all hybrid status employees, supported by their line manager. This will need to be reviewed if any substantial changes are made to the working environment or working arrangements, or if the employee's physical needs change. Employees must fully participate in completing the necessary risk assessment paperwork and review this with their manager. If the employee has any complex health or physical needs, the health and safety team can support with a specific workspace assessment.
- 3.14.5 Hybrid status employees have a responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home. There must also be adequate ventilation, sufficient electric point access and lighting.
- 3.14.6 Hybrid employees should ensure that the general fabric of the home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which they work, is/are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work e.g. electrical sockets. Employees should ensure that no equipment is left to charge unattended and that the correct charging device is used in relation to each item of equipment. Any electrical equipment provided by the Council should be visually inspected by the employee regularly for signs of wear, scorching, overheating, cable faults etc. Any defects should be reported to their line manager as soon as possible so that a replacement can be arranged.
- 3.14.7 Hybrid employees will be required to bring work equipment into a specified Council building for PAT testing, when requested to do so.
- 3.14.8 Managers should seek advice regarding any specific concerns around health and safety issues as all health and safety requirements must be appropriately addressed.

### 3.15 Data Protection, Security and Confidentiality

- 3.15.1 Maintaining the security of the information we process is vital and those working away from a Council office are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation and Council policies, just as if they were working in a Council office.
- 3.15.2 Managers must agree at the outset with their staff as to how confidential or sensitive information will be handled when working in hybrid ways.

### 3.16 Insurance

- 3.16.1 Equipment provided by the Council as part of the hybrid working arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy.
- 3.16.2 Hybrid employees are advised to contact their own insurance company to inform them that they will be working at home.
- 3.16.3 Liability insurance arranged by the Council will operate once risk assessments are completed satisfactorily. Risk control measures identified during risk assessment must be addressed prior to the hybrid working commencing.
- 3.16.4 Employees undertaking their duties remotely are covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Policy. Any work-related accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's incident reporting guidelines.

## 4. Formal flexible working requests

### 4.1 Eligibility

4.1.1 All employees have the right to submit a flexible working request.

4.1.2 Employees may only make two applications every 12 months.

### 4.2 Implications of an Agreement to Work Flexibly

4.2.1 Formal flexible working requests will likely result in a change to an employee's contract of employment and can have an impact on pay, pension and/or annual leave calculations.

4.2.2 A flexible working arrangement may be agreed as a permanent change or alternatively for a defined period. If deemed necessary by the manager, it may also be subject to a trial period with regular reviews which will be agreed in writing.

4.2.3 There is no right to revert to the original contractual terms at a later date if a permanent arrangement is agreed. The employee may apply for a further change which will be handled as a new and separate request, where the employee must meet the eligibility criteria as set out in this policy.

### 4.3 Application

Formal flexible working requests should be made by submitting a Flexible Working Request Form on dodl.

### 4.4 Responding to a flexible working request

4.4.1 The Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 requires that employees should have a conclusive response to their flexible working request within two months of making a request. Unless an extension has been agreed with the employee, this includes the appeal process. Consequently, to allow time for an appeal, it is recommended that managers respond to flexible working requests within 4 weeks.

4.4.2 All flexible working requests should be dealt with in an inclusive and reasonable manner. Where service needs can be met, we encourage a 'yes' by default approach to flexible working. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the organisation.

4.4.3 Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar flexible working arrangement.

### 4.5. Possible outcomes of a flexible working request

Possible outcomes include:

- granted in full;
- refused; or
- modified by mutual agreement
- granted on a fixed-term basis and/or trial period.

## 4.6 Granting a flexible working request

After having considered the proposed arrangement, the line manager may decide to grant the request without further need for discussion. They should do this by:

- (i) approving the request on dodl; and
- (ii) advising HR of the change to the contract by completing a Contract Variation form.

## 4.7 Considering the Request

4.7.1 Where a line manager believes a request requires further consideration, then a meeting should be held with the employee to discuss the request. This should be held as soon as possible and always within 3 weeks of receipt of the request.

4.7.2 The employee may be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or colleague. It is the employee's responsibility to arrange this.

4.7.3 The purpose of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements, how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the Service, and to discuss in a spirit of collaboration, how the employee's request might be made to work in practice.

## 4.8 Refusing the Request

4.8.1 A flexible working request may only be refused for one or more of the statutory reasons listed below. No other reasons, however compelling, can be used.

- The burden of additional costs.
- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff.
- An inability to recruit additional staff.
- A detrimental impact on quality.
- A detrimental impact on performance.
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work.
- A planned structural change.

4.8.2 There must always be robust evidence to support the reason for declining the employee's request. This evidence will be referred to in the case of an appeal.

## 4.9 Communicating the decision

4.9.1 Following consideration of the flexible working request the Manager is required to inform the employee of the decision in writing as soon as possible and usually within a week of the meeting.

4.9.2 The letter will include:

- Confirmation that the flexible working request has been agreed, or an alternative has been agreed and the start date of the arrangement.
- Notification that the flexible working request has been refused on clear business grounds permitted by legislation (as noted above) and the reasons. Details on the right of appeal will also be included.

## 4.10 Trialling new working arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the organisation a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged sufficient time should be allowed for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

## 4.11 Appeal

- 4.11.1 The employee has the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.
- 4.11.2 The employee may lodge an appeal within 1 week of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing.
- 4.11.3 The appeal will be heard within 3 weeks. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a Trade Union Representative at this meeting.
- 4.11.4 The employee will normally be informed of the outcome to their appeal within 1 week of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended with the agreement of both the employee and the line manager.



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County Council

# Prevention & Management of Stress Policy



People & Organisation Service  
January 2024



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW**  
**LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**

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# 1. Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Ceredigion County Council's (the Council) is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees. The Council is committed to creating a healthy workplace and a culture where employees talk openly about their health and wellbeing and ask for support without fear of judgement or reprisal.
- 1.1.2 The Council has a duty of care to ensure employees are not knowingly subjected to circumstances in which their ability to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing is compromised.
- 1.1.3 The Council recognises that work-related stress can place immense demands on an employee's physical and mental health. It can impact behaviour, performance and relationships with colleagues, as well as leading to long-term absence from work.
- 1.1.4 Knowing how to identify, manage and prevent the factors that can cause work-related stress is key to managing people effectively and ensuring a healthy workplace.
- 1.1.5 The Council recognises stress from outside of the working environment can also impact an employee's physical and mental health. Whilst stress of this kind is beyond the Council's control, as part of our commitment to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, the Council will offer support, through appropriate resources.

## 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish an effective and consistent approach to the prevention of work-related stress and to provide supporting services where cases of work-related and non-work-related stress are identified.
- Help managers and employees recognise and manage stress in a pro-active manner.

## 1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all employees other than those who are employed by School Governing Bodies.

## 1.4 Definition of Stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them." This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to a person's mental and physical health.

## 1.5 Legislative Context

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities, as with any other hazard. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires an employer to take measures to control that risk.

## 1.6 Roles and Responsibilities

### 1.6.1 Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- Raising issues of concern with their manager or another manager within their service who they feel comfortable to express their concerns with.
- Considering opportunities for counselling and support when offered and recommended.
- Employees are not obliged to complete an Individual stress risk assessment, however doing so can help them and their manager to work together to assess and take appropriate action on removing or reducing the triggers of excessive pressure from the workplace which are affecting the employee.
- Participating in stress awareness workshops and training that may be offered.

### 1.6.2 Line Managers

Line Managers are responsible for:

- Monitoring workloads to ensure that people are not having to consistently work at unmanageable levels.
- Attending the training offered for managers in the management of staff mental health and wellbeing and recognising and managing stress.
- Initiating Stress Risk Assessments and responding to them in a timely and supportive manner.

### 1.6.3 The Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer

The Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer is responsible for:

- Giving guidance to managers on the application of this Policy including the completion of the various stress risk assessments.
- Providing specialist advice and awareness training on recognising and managing stress, including how to support employees experiencing poor mental health from stress.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Informing the Health and Wellbeing steering group of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work, along with any emerging trends and areas of concern within the organisation.

### 1.6.4 Human Resources

Human Resources are responsible for:

- Signposting managers to this policy and associated risk assessments and toolkit.

- Encouraging referrals to Occupational Health and raising awareness of the Council's Employee Assistance Programme and/or the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer where appropriate.

#### **1.6.5 Health and Safety Team**

The Health and Safety team are responsible for:

- Consulting with colleagues on the issue of stress including providing advice and guidance on carrying out stress risk assessment.
- The Health and Safety team should conduct joint inspections of the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

#### **1.6.6 Health and Wellbeing Steering Group**

The steering group will be responsible for:

- Overseeing and monitoring of the efficacy of this policy and procedure as well as other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.
- Carrying out an advisory role in the prevention and management of stress in the workforce.

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 Introduction

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the prevention and management of stress guidance found on CeriNet.

### 2.2 Stress Risk Assessment Framework

2.2.1 The Council has a legal obligation to assess the risk of stress-related ill-health arising from work activities and to take measures to control that risk.

2.2.2 The Council is also committed to approaching stress management proactively, focusing on prevention and early intervention.

2.2.3 In response to this, the Council will apply a multi-level stress risk assessment framework which consists of the following tiers:

- Workforce Risk Assessment
- Team Stress Risk Assessment
- Individual Stress Risk Assessment

2.2.4 The Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) 'Management Standards' will form the foundation of this framework. The 'Management Standards' cover the following six areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are identified as the most significant contributors to workplace stress:

- **Demands:** Includes workload, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control:** The influence a person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** Includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.
- **Relationships:** Promoting positive working to avoid conflicting and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

### 2.3 Workforce Risk Assessment

2.3.1 Workforce stress levels will be annually risk assessed using findings from the Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted in alignment with HSE 'Management Standards'

2.3.2 The survey will be anonymous, but participants can choose to identify their service area and Corporate Manager.

2.3.3 Survey findings will guide both workforce-wide stress prevention and management initiatives, as well as inform the need for further risk assessment in specific service areas or teams, allowing for targeted interventions.

- 2.3.4 The People & Organisation Service is responsible for coordinating the annual survey and sharing survey findings with:
- Leadership Group
  - the workforce
  - the Employee Health and Wellbeing Steering Group
  - the Health & Safety Forum
  - Service Areas and Corporate Managers
- 2.3.5 The People & Organisation Service is responsible for completing a risk assessment form to ensure any stressors, existing precautions and any further actions and review dates are recorded.
- 2.3.6 In the event that participation rates in the annual Health and Wellbeing Survey are so low that findings cannot be relied upon, for example under 15%, then it may be necessary to conduct a Team Risk Assessment.

## 2.4 Team Risk Assessment

- 2.4.1 There will be occasions where it will be necessary to conduct a stress risk assessment on groups of employees. For example, this may be in response to:
- significant planned change e.g. restructure, changes in working practices
  - Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey findings
  - increased sickness absence or staff turnover
  - concerns raised by team members, the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer, Health & Safety Officers, Human Resources, Occupational Health or Trade Union representatives.
- 2.4.2 Managers play a crucial role in identifying and mitigating stress risks within their teams. It is their responsibility to lead the risk assessment process and ensure its timely and thorough completion.
- 2.4.3 To conduct a comprehensive risk assessment, managers must proactively identify potential workplace stressors and root causes. This can be achieved by conducting a team stress survey (template available on Ceri Net), team discussions, or holding a focus group with employee representatives.
- 2.4.4 When ready to conduct the risk assessment the 'Stress Risk Assessment Form' available on CeriNet should be followed. This will ensure any stressors, existing precautions, necessary actions and their ownership are recorded.
- 2.4.5 It will be necessary to set a review date for all actions, ensuring review dates reflect the severity of the risk (see guidance on CeriNet).
- 2.4.6 The completed Stress Risk Assessment Form should be forwarded to the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer for recording purposes and where necessary, to agree any further actions.
- 2.4.7 Managers should share any plan of action with the group of employees.

## 2.5 Individual Risk Assessment

2.5.1 All employees may experience periods of pressure at work or their personal lives, and short periods of pressure are not necessarily of concern. Stress however can negatively impact an individual's health and wellbeing. Stress is not a sign of weakness and anybody at any time may experience stress for a variety of reasons.

2.5.2 Where it has been identified that an employee is suffering with symptoms of stress, or an employee has advised they are suffering from stress, an individual stress risk assessment process must be initiated by the manager to identify the root causes of the stress and to implement effective actions to mitigate and alleviate them.

2.5.3 The stress risk assessment process should be initiated as soon possible (and no later the 5 working days in all but exceptional circumstances).

2.5.4 Prior to undertaking the stress risk assessment process, managers should refer to the prevention and management of stress guidance found on CeriNet.

### 2.5.5 **Initial meeting:**

Prior to conducting the stress risk assessment, managers should meet with the individual to:

- explain the Stress Risk Assessment process, emphasising its collaborative and supportive nature.
- signpost the employee to the Council's internal sources of advice and support.
- ask the employee to complete the Employee Stress Self-Assessment Form (available on CeriNet) and agree the date for returning the form to the manager.
- Agree a date to hold the Stress Risk Assessment meeting.

### 2.5.6 **Stress Risk Assessment meeting:**

2.5.6.1 Managers must be sensitive to the importance of ensuring the individual feels comfortable in discussing any health and wellbeing issues. As such, managers may need to consider additional support or adjustments, for example:

- sharing the Stress Risk Assessment template beforehand and signposting the employee to the employee guidance available on CeriNet.
- allowing the employee to be supported by a colleague or Trade Union representative.
- changing the physical arrangements of the meeting, for example, arranging to meet in person or through Teams depending on the employee's preference.

2.5.6.2 Managers should use the Stress Risk Assessment Form available on CeriNet to complete the risk assessment.

2.5.6.3 The risk assessment should be completed jointly by the manager and employee, and an action plan developed and agreed.

2.5.6.4 Where it is found that personal stress is having an adverse effect on the individual, they should be encouraged to access support through the

Employee Assistance Programme, their GP or alternatively they may wish to seek advice from the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer.

**2.5.7 Actions/Support Measures:**

- 2.5.7.1 Having completed the risk assessment form it is imperative that both the Manager and the individual take responsibility for implementing all agreed actions.
- 2.5.7.2 A copy of the agreed Stress Risk Assessment Form should be provided to the individual and a copy shared with the Health and Safety team for reviewing and recording purposes and, where necessary, to agree any further actions.
- 2.5.7.3 Regular reviews should be conducted to monitor the efficacy of the support measures identified. They should be mutually agreed and diarised for a minimum of three months following the initial completion of the risk assessment.
- 2.5.7.4 The risk assessment should be repeated if the employee continues to experience stress at work, so as to provide the opportunity to explore alternative or additional solutions and support.



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## People & Organisation Service

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# Driving at Work - Council Fleet Policy



People & Organisation Service  
2024



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW**  
**LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**

## Version Control

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Author: People & Organisation Service

Cabinet Approval: 01/02/2022

Publication Date: 01/04/2022

Review Date: 03/11/2023

### **Revised Policy**

Cabinet Approval:

Publication Date:

Review Date:

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## 1. Policy statement

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This Driving at Work – Council Fleet policy clearly sets out the expectations on those with managerial or supervisory responsibility for drivers as well as individual drivers. It is important that all managers / supervisors and drivers adhere to this policy and the procedures, which adopts the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) safe driving risk-management guidance covering:

- **Safe driver:** are staff fit and competent to drive safely?
- **Safe vehicle:** are vehicles fit for purpose and in a safe road-worthy state?
- **Safe journey:** are journeys necessary and are they planned?

It is everyone's duty when at work:

- To take reasonable care of our own safety
- To take reasonable care of the safety of others who may be affected by what we do or fail to do
- To co-operate and adhere to the Council's policies so that we can all comply with our legal duties and obligations

## 2. Scope

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This policy applies to all Ceredigion County Council employees and agency staff who drive the Council's Fleet as part of their duties.

The table below describes the two main driver categories in the Council:

Council fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required to drive a vehicle supplied by the Council for some or all of their role.</li></ul> <p><b>This policy applies to this category of driver</b></p>
Grey fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required to drive for work reasons and paid mileage using a private vehicle or has use of a day hire vehicle arranged through the Council's Procurement Service.</li></ul> <p><b>See <i>Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles Policy</i> for this category of driver</b></p>

The policy does not apply to commuting prior to the driver starting work, unless they are driving a vehicle provided by the Authority.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

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### 3.1 Elected Members

- Are advised on this Policy by Council Officers and have the responsibility to ensure adequate resources are available to enable the implementation of this policy and all other necessary measures to mitigate foreseeable risks to our employees, and agency staff who drive the Council's Fleet as part of their duties.
- An elected member with sufficient knowledge and experience is appointed the Council's health and safety champion and will oversee the development of this policy and bring driver and vehicle safety matters to the attention of the responsible portfolio Cabinet members.

### 3.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the Council's Driving at Work policy is implemented and maintained. The Chief Executive will facilitate the provision of systems to carry out the following:

- The Chief Executive is directly responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees and any others who may be affected by any driving undertaken on behalf of the Authority as part of their duties.
- Ensuring the participation, commitment and involvement at all levels in the Council in improving the safety of our employees, governors, elected members, volunteers and agency staff who drive for work.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to comply with Driving at Work – Council Fleet policy and associated arrangements.

### 3.3 Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Manager and team will be responsible for the preparation and review of this policy. They will also:

- Assist with monitoring and auditing the unannounced fleet vehicle checks carried out by the Fleet Management Team.
- Following the completion of an incident management investigation by a line manager / supervisor, will review the investigation and if deemed appropriate also undertake further investigation into driving incidents and/or potentially dangerous near- misses at work.
- Assist with complex/high risk driving at work risk assessments.
- Assist the learning and development team to develop a driving safely at work e-learning programme.
- Work in collaboration with the relevant Service area and HR in the event of driving at work incidents where reckless behaviour, drugs or alcohol are believed to be a contributing factor.

- Report RIDDOR reportable incidents to the HSE and liaise with the HSE, Police and other external enforcing agencies where required.

### **3.4 Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers**

Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers have the general responsibility for compliance with the health and safety within their service areas. There is also an expectation that from the head of the Council down, individuals should lead by personal example and follow the guidance in this policy, both in the way they drive themselves and in encouraging colleagues and employees to drive safely and responsibly.

A Corporate Director will undertake the role of Health and Safety Champion bringing driver, Grey Fleet and Council Fleet safety matters to the attention of Leadership Group.

### **3.5 Trade Union Safety Representatives**

Safety Representatives have an important role in ensuring employees are fully consulted on and engaging with the Council's policies on safe driving, updates on driving and health at work and encouraging open communication between managers, unions and employees. Safety Representatives help by:

- Attending Health and Safety Representatives meetings and cascade information to the workforce and collect feedback.
- Reporting concerns / issues relating to driving at work that have identified, or brought to their attention, to their supervisor / line manager or the relevant service area in the first instance. If these are subsequently not resolved, to refer them to the Health and Safety Representatives meeting or the Health and Safety Team, and if not resolved in a timely manner, to escalate to the Union for further consideration.
- Leading by personal example.
- Highlighting driving at work concerns from an operational level.
- Offering feedback and contributing to the review of this policy.

### 3.6 Managers and Employee's responsibilities

Driving at work activity	Supervisors / Managers must:	Employees must:
<b>Council Fleet and personal vehicles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure their employee has read and understood the requirements of the Fleet Driver/Plant Operator Protocol on appointment.</li> <li>• Enter the employee's driving licence details onto the CERI system.</li> <li>• Ensure that their drivers have a valid licence for the category of vehicle they drive at work.</li> <li>• Carry out risk assessments related to driving activities and communicate these to their teams.</li> <li>• Ensure drivers report driving incidents via the Council's Incident Management process.</li> <li>• Carry out thorough investigation of driving related incidents at work through the Council's Incident Management process.</li> <li>• Ensure their staff are aware of the policies and procedures relevant to driving at work, including the Alcohol and Drug Misuse policy, Sickness Absence policy, H&amp;S policy, Lone-working requirements etc.</li> <li>• Advise the Fleet Management team immediately if a driver reports a diagnosis, or any change in a previously reported medical condition, that could impact on their ability to drive.</li> <li>• Monitor the health and behaviour of their drivers including incident numbers, feedback from gate checks and complaint reports etc. and take appropriate action where necessary.</li> <li>• Monitor the health and wellbeing of their drivers through supervision, annual appraisals and Occupational Health support where required</li> <li>• Advise the Fleet Management team immediately if a driver's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read, understand and comply with the Fleet Driver/Plant Operator Protocol document on appointment.</li> <li>• Comply and co-operate with the controls and measures put in place regarding driving safely at work.</li> <li>• Hold a valid driving licence for the category of vehicle they drive at work.</li> <li>• Drive in accordance with the current laws of the road and Highway Code (e.g. traffic signs and signals, speed restrictions, use of seat belts, satellite navigation, action to take following incidents on the road, etc.).</li> <li>• Ensure that any loads in the vehicle are securely stowed.</li> <li>• Be fit to drive. If fitness to drive is impaired (e.g. medical condition, taking medication etc.), they must inform their supervisor / line manager immediately and notify the DVLA as required.</li> <li>• Comply with any drug and alcohol test requests as outlined in the Fleet Driver/Plant Operator Protocol document.</li> <li>• Notify their supervisor immediately if they receive a diagnosis, or any change in a previously reported medical condition, that could impact on their ability to drive.</li> <li>• Ensure that their eyesight meets the minimum requirements for driving and wear prescription glasses or corrective lenses if needed at all times whilst driving.</li> <li>• Not use any electronic devices including mobile phones when driving or when the vehicle is running.</li> <li>• Report any incidents whilst driving at work to their supervisor / line manager immediately.</li> </ul>

	<p>licence is suspended or revoked and seek specialist advice from their HR Advisor on the issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work alongside HR recruitment process to ensure the job description and person specification are met (e.g. the checking of driving licences prior to appointment).</li> <li>• Advise Fleet Management team immediately of any unspent driving convictions/ penalty points or any pending prosecutions / charges for driving related offences and seek specialist advice from their HR Advisor on the issue where relevant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with the Council's smoke free policy</li> <li>• Complete and record, the daily vehicle checks prior to first use each day and report any defects identified by the check or which arise whilst in use where appropriate.</li> <li>• Notify their supervisor/line manager of any unspent driving convictions/ penalty points or any pending prosecutions / charges for driving related offences. Carry out all actions required to maintain their driving licence entitlement including but not limited to renewing their licence by the expiry date and attending any medicals where required to renew the licence.</li> <li>• Comply with any restrictions related to their licence.</li> <li>• Notify their supervisor/line manager immediately of any reason, which may lead to the suspension or revocation of their licence in full or in part.</li> <li>• Plan their journeys taking into account weather, time of day and where relevant, time constraints e.g. meeting start time.</li> <li>• Attend any training required to reduce risk, maintain competency and put this training into effect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Driving Council Fleet</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure their drivers have attended all relevant training e.g. CDAT and MiDAS updates, H&amp;S update training, vehicle familiarisation sessions and toolbox talks relevant to their duties.</li> <li>• Ensure their driving staff have attended Fleet and job specific training prior to starting their driving duties</li> <li>• Ensuring drivers provide driving licence and Driver CPC card (where appropriate) details every 6 months to enable checks to confirm or reaffirm eligibility to drive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and record the daily vehicle defect book and report any defects immediately to their supervisor / line manager.</li> <li>• Attend any additional training required (MiDAS, CDAT, etc.) for the type of fleet they drive at work and ensure they are up to date. Where required, to undertake the 37 hours of driver CPC training over a 5-year period in line with the Council's Driver CPC programme. Where required carry their Driver CPC card at all times whilst driving Council Fleet.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure drivers complete their daily driver checks prior to first use; that they are recording these and reporting defects.</li> <li>• Notify Insurance Section of any driver who reports that they have received a driving conviction / endorsement to ensure continuation of cover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take the breaks from driving as required by current legislation.</li> </ul>
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### 3.7 Fleet Management

The Council's Fleet Management Service is responsible for the management of the Council's owned, leased and hired fleet. This involves:

- Ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety and Fleet / driving related legislation,
- Complying with its obligations as an Operator's Licence holder,
- Developing and reviewing its Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments in liaison with the Corporate Health and Safe Unit,
- Undertaking audits of compliance with Fleet related management and driving requirements,
- Providing or arranging for the provision of Fleet driver training e.g. Driver CPC, MIDAS, CDAT and Infringement training,
- Management and supervision of Fleet Management related contractors on site,
- Management of fuel stocks,
- Operation of the Council's Transport Maintenance Units (TMUs) which are situated at Glanyrafon Depot, nr. Aberystwyth and Penrhos Depot, nr. Llandysul whose work includes:
  - Planning and undertaking scheduled inspections, maintenance and preparation for MOT / Annual testing,
  - Diagnosing faults and identifying defects; undertaking or arranging repairs where necessary
  - Responding to / recovering fleet involved in accidents or which have broken down (including on call out of hours)
  - Undertaking Class 4 and 7 MOTs,
  - Management of parts and consumables,
  - Operation of activities in line with Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments.

## 4. Revision of policy

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The Council will review and update this policy as required to reflect changes in legislation, processes, post-incident recommendations and case law.

## How the success of the policy will be measured

The success of this policy will be measured by the increase or decrease in:

- The number of driving related incidents reported.
- The number of reportable driver related incidents that are deemed to be avoidable.
- The number of traffic infringements received.
- The number of notices of intended prosecutions of drivers received in relation to vehicles of the Council's Fleet.
- The costs of repairs and maintenance of the Fleet.
- Other financial costs associated with vehicle use.
- The average cost of vehicle-related employee compensation claims.

## 5. Appendices

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Appendix 1	Driver/Plant Operator Protocol
Appendix 2	Driving Incident – Reporting Flow Chart

## Ceredigion County Council

### Fleet Driver/Plant Operator Protocol

This protocol sets out the expectations, requirements and conditions of all employees who are required to drive or operate any Fleet item within the course of their duties.

#### Definitions

<i>Council Fleet</i>	<i>All vehicles, plant and trailers owned, leased or on hire to the Ceredigion County Council</i>
<i>Drivers</i>	<i>All employees who are required to drive and/or operate an item of the Council Fleet during the course of their duties</i>
<i>Employees</i>	<i>Any permanent, temporary, casual, relief or agency staff employed by or working on behalf of Ceredigion County Council</i>

**All employees must agree and fully adhere to the following conditions, failure to do so may result in the revocation of the right to drive/operate a Ceredigion Council vehicle and disciplinary action.**

#### Employee personal responsibilities:

- Employees must inform their supervisor / line manager if they have any new or existing underlying health conditions or any other physical or sensory impairments that may affect their ability to drive / operate their vehicle / plant safely. They must present themselves when requested to do so for an annual health assessment to assess, wellbeing and fitness to drive/operate Council Fleet.
- Employees must hold a valid licence to drive or operate the vehicle, plant or trailer they use.
- Employees must notify their manager of any unspent driving convictions/ penalty points.
- Employees must obey road/ traffic regulations and drive with due care and attention at all times.
- Employees must have completed the Ceredigion Driver Awareness Training (CDAT), MIDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training (where applicable) and vehicle familiarisation (where appropriate) for the vehicles, plant or trailer they use.
- Drivers must ensure that they, and all passengers under the age of 14 years old, are wearing seatbelts as required by law and Council policy.
- Drivers must remind all passengers 14 years or older of their personal responsibility to wear seatbelts as required by law and Council policy.

- Employees involved in any vehicle / plant related incident must report this to their line manager immediately, irrespective of whether anyone was hurt or not, and no matter how insignificant the damage to the vehicle or plant. Drivers must follow the incident reporting procedure as outlined in the incident reporting flow chart.
- Employees must not interfere with or modify any risk mitigating equipment (including dash cameras & telematics).
- Employees must report to their line manager if they are taking any prescribed (or over the counter) medication that may affect their ability to drive / operate their vehicle / plant safely.
- Employees are required to comply with all requirements related to maintaining their driving licence entitlement including but not limited to:
  - renewing their licence at the required intervals specified on their licence in accordance with their age and / or medical conditions; and
  - notifying the DVLA of any new reportable medical conditions or changes to existing medical condition which may affect their ability to drive.
- Employees must not smoke or use electronic cigarettes in vehicles.
- Employees who are required to hold a Drivers CPC card must undertake the 37 hours of driver CPC training where relevant over a 5 year period. Drivers must carry their CPC cards with them at all times whilst driving vehicles / plant where driver CPC is required.
- The employee must submit their licence and CPC card details on a 6 monthly basis; when requesting a new defect check book or drivers hours book; or as required by their manager.
- Employees must only use the vehicle for work purposes (some employees may be permitted to take vehicles home; in which case, Council vehicles must not be used for domestic / personal purposes).

### **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

- Employees must not drive / operate any vehicles or any equipment if they are under the influence of controlled drugs or alcohol.
- To ensure the effective implementation and operation of this agreement and the Driving at Work Policy, the Council reserves the right to require employees to undertake alcohol and/or drug tests when it is suspected that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol on that day.
- Employees are reminded that a request to undergo alcohol and drug testing does not, in itself, indicate that they are suspected of wrongdoing.
- Where testing takes place, the individual will need to sign a written consent to be tested. Failure to give consent, or refusal to supply a sample of urine, blood, or other sample as reasonably required, will be considered to be a breach of this agreement and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Tests will be conducted under the direction of, and test results interpreted by, a professional external service that meets appropriate standards. Staff will have access to a duplicate of any sample taken to enable them, if they so wish, to have it independently analysed. Other arrangements relating to testing will be discussed with affected members of staff at the time.

- When testing for alcohol, a blood-alcohol level of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood or above will usually lead to disciplinary action.
- When testing for controlled drugs, the threshold limit per litre of blood will be different for each drug, as set out in the *Drug Driving (Specified Limits) (England and Wales) Regulations 2014*. Results above the threshold limit will usually lead to disciplinary action.

**Employee vehicle / plant responsibilities:**

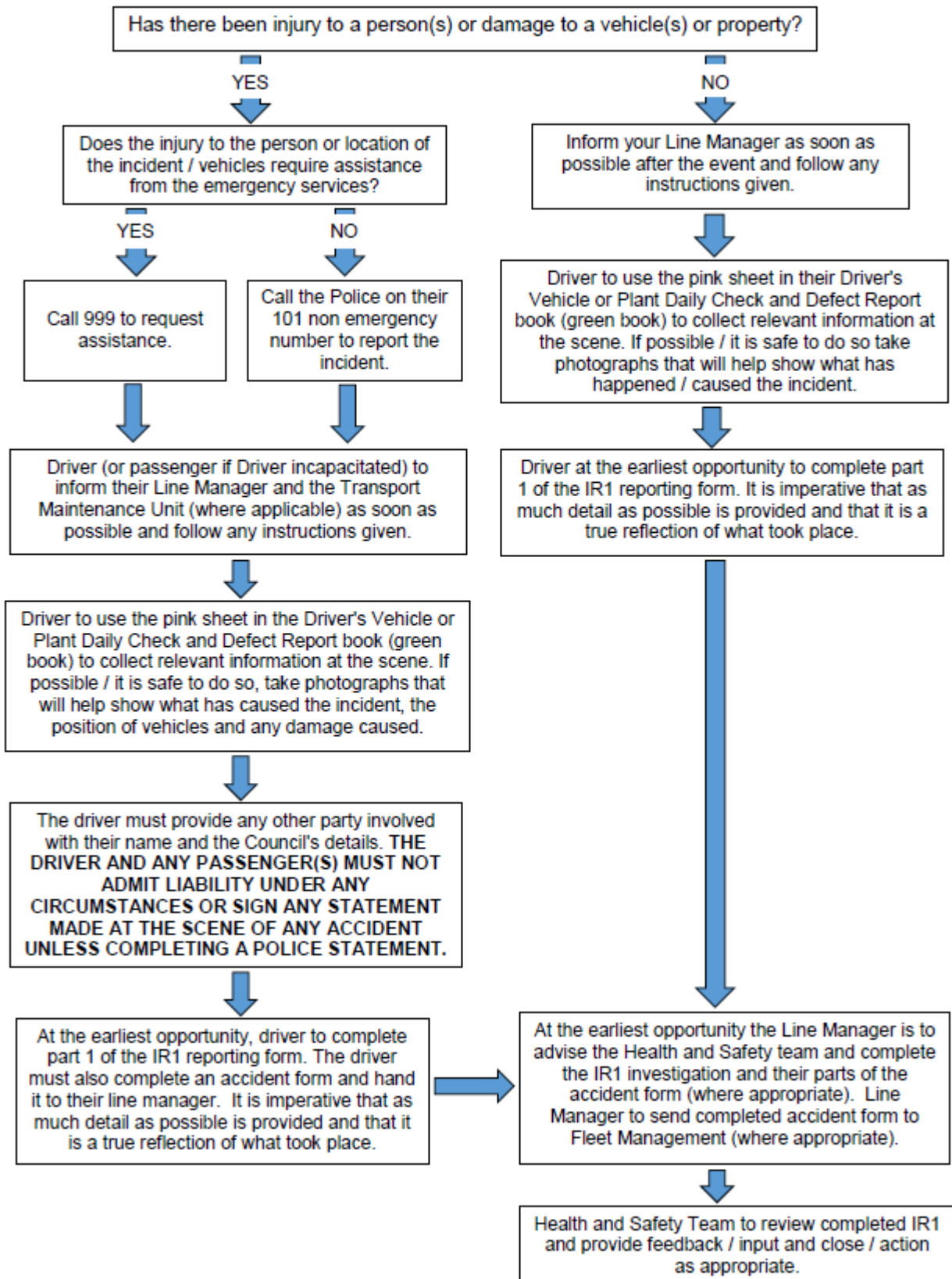
- Drivers must ensure that they complete their daily checks prior to first use of a vehicle, plant or trailer each day and record this in their Driver's Daily Check.
- Drivers must report any defects identified as part of their daily check, or any which arise during use, to the Transport Maintenance Unit immediately and follow any instruction given.
- The employee is responsible for ensuring the vehicle / plant is kept in a clean, usable condition.
- The employee is required to present the vehicle / plant / trailer for inspection at the required intervals.

**IMPORTANT**

**This list is not exhaustive; all drivers must ensure they comply with all legal and employment requirements.**

**As is set out in the Council's Disciplinary Policy, employees who are found to have 'deliberately, fraudulently or negligently' caused damage to an item of the Council Fleet, third party vehicle or property and where the Council 'will incur cost to repair or replace' may be liable for these costs following a disciplinary hearing. The cost will be capped at an amount of £250, or the actual cost of repair if lower. As is also set out in the Council's Disciplinary Policy, employees will have the right to appeal against any decision to recover the costs.**

## Driving Incident - Reporting Process Flow Chart





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## Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Hybrid</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Report on Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2022 Statistical Return and Report of the Chief Coroner</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>To provide information contained in the Senior Coroner's 2022 Statistical Return and Coroners Report</b>
<b>REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE PURPOSE:</b>	<b>Not requested INFORMATION:</b>

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Senior Coroner for Ceredigion prepares an annual report ('Statistical Return') on deaths reported to the Coroner, which is sent to the Ministry of Justice for publication as part of the Coroners' Statistics on the UK Government website.

(2022-2023 statistics available at [Coroners statistics 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/coroners-statistics-2022))

The Senior Coroner should also provide a report to the Council which should be published on the Council's website, and include relevant statistics on current/concluded cases (with comparison figures for previous years), an update on Coroner work and relevant issues, a summary of the Coroner's team and staffing arrangements, and any future plans. To date, this report has not presented to the Council by the Senior Coroner.

### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

#### **1)Ceredigion Statistical Return for 2022**

The Statistical Return for 2022 was published on the Council's website on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023 following the publication of the National Statistics publication by the Ministry of Justice. The return is now presented to Committee for information (**Appendix 1**). The committee should note that sensitive personal information has been redacted from the Statistical Return.

#### **2)Report of the Chief Coroner**

The Report of the Chief Coroner on the coroner service 10 year post-reform is available at: [Chief Coroner's Report: The coroner service 10 years post-reform – Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#).

#### **3)Coroners statistics 2023**

[Coroners statistics 2023 - National statistics announcement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).-these will be available from 9/5/24

#### **4) IT Software and equipment**

The Coroner and his staff was provided with a Coroners software system and IT equipment during 2023, which will enable the Coroner' service to modernise.

#### **5) Inquests 2023**

During 2023, the Ceredigion Coroner:

- opened 8 inquests

- undertook 3 Inquests-in writing  
[Coroner Services - Ceredigion County Council](#)

**Has an Integrated Impact No Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why**

**Summary:** This report does not represent a change in policy or strategy.

**WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:**

**Long term:  
Integration:  
Collaboration:  
Involvement:  
Prevention:**

**RECOMMENDATION (S):**

That the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):**

Monitoring of the annual information relating to deaths reported to the Ceredigion Senior Coroner.

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Ceredigion Senior Coroner’s Statistical Return 2022**

**Contact Name:**

Elin Prysor

**Designation:**

Corporate Lead Officer - Legal & Governance (and Monitoring Officer)

**Date of Report:**

06.02.2024

**Acronyms:**

N/A

## DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONERS

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2022

**PLEASE READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING**

Please complete and return this spreadsheet by 1 March 2023 to:

Matteo Chiesa


[Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk)

If you have any problems about how this spreadsheet should be completed, please refer to the “Instructions” worksheet, or contact Matteo Chiesa at

[Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk)

or alternatively contact 07967 595014

**PLEASE ENTER DETAILS HERE AFTER COMPLETION**

<b>NAME:</b> <input type="text" value="Steven Lloyd"/>	<b>ADDRESS:</b> <input type="text" value="Police Station&lt;br/&gt;Aberystwyth&lt;br/&gt;Ceredigion&lt;br/&gt;SY23 1PH"/>
<b>DATE:</b> <input type="text" value="24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; February 2023"/>	<b>E-MAIL ADDRESS</b> <input type="text" value="Steve.lloyd@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk"/>
<b>TELEPHONE</b> <input type="text" value="01267 615104"/>	
<b>SOFTWARE PROVIDER</b> (Please select from dropdown options) <input type="text" value="Other"/> 	<b>FURTHER DETAILS – OTHER PROVIDER:</b> <input type="text" value="Please select software provider from the dropdown list"/> <input type="text" value="No provider"/>
Please return the completed spreadsheet by 1 March 2023 to: Matteo Chiesa <a href="mailto:Coroners_Returns@justice.gov.uk">Coroners_Returns@justice.gov.uk</a>	

**DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONERS**  
January to December 2022

<b>FULL NAME OF CORONER'S AREA</b>
CEREDIGION

*PLEASE READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING AND READ THE CHECKS SUMMARY BEFORE SUBMITTING*

**SECTION A1: New Casework**

<b>SECTION A: DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONER IN 2022</b>									
	With post mortem			Without post mortem			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
(i) Deaths reported to the coroner which will not result in an inquest (whether or not a certificate of any sort is issued)	82	58	140	102	94	196	184	152	336
(ii) Deaths reported to coroners on which inquests are to be or were opened (even if not concluded)	15	3	18	2	2	4	17	5	22
(iii) Deaths reported to coroners on which inquests are under investigation and is not yet known if an inquest will be opened	11	9	20	0	0	0	11	9	20
<b>TOTAL: (i) + (ii) + (iii)</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>378</b>
(iv) Number of cases transferred out of area under Section 2 or 3 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (not to be included above, even if they include a post mortem before transfer)									6
(v) Deaths reported or referred to the coroner requiring neither inquest nor the issue of any certificate <b>MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE "NO INQUEST NO POST MORTEM" box above</b> , along with cases where certificates were issued. <u>For cases where sex of deceased not known, please indicate the number of such cases in the yellow cell on the right</u>									0

<b>POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS</b> – <u>NOT</u> to include cases that were later transferred out (if more than one on the same body, only details relating to the <u>FIRST PM</u> should be included in this section)	
Number ordered at STANDARD RATE	<b>173</b>
Number ordered at NON-STANDARD RATE	<b>5</b>
<b>Number</b> of PMs which included HISTOLOGY	<b>46</b>
Number of PMs which included TOXICOLOGY	<b>35</b>

Number of PMs conducted using External Examination (even if the PM included an Autopsy), Imaging (even if the PM included an Autopsy), Test on Samples – (Toxicology/Histology if not part of an Autopsy)	<b>177</b>
Number of PMs conducted not including an Autopsy	<b>1</b>
Number of PMs conducted by a HO forensic pathologist	<b>3</b>
Number of second PMs conducted following request by defence lawyer	<b>0</b>
<b>N.B. we do not require any further details of any second or subsequent PM ordered in the same body to be recorded here</b>	
Number of Out of England orders made	<b>0</b>
Number of deaths abroad (give details on separate page please)	<b>0</b>

**For deaths in state detention (or within seven days of release from State Detention) reported to the coroner in 2022,**

**Please provide a count of new cases in each of the following definitions:  
(For further details, if required, see the sheet “State Detention definitions”)**

0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
0  
**0**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Prison Custody                                  | 2. Police |
| Custody  |           |
| 3. Immigration removal centres                     | 4. Mental |
| Health Act detention                               |           |
| 5. Residents of Probation Approved Premises        |           |
| 6. Secure training centre                          |           |
| 7. Local authority secure children’s homes         |           |
| 8. Release on temporary licence (ROTL)             |           |
| 9. Release from custody within previous seven days |           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       |           |

N.B. Please be aware that this data is cross-checked with National Offender Management Service. Please check these figures as any discrepancies will cause delay in processing your return

<b>Section A2: INVESTIGATIONS DISCONTINUED PRIOR TO INQUEST in 2022 under section 4(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009</b>	
The number of cases discontinued WITH Post-Mortem	<b>33</b>
The number of cases discontinued WITHOUT Post-Mortem	<b>0</b>

**SECTION B, C and D: Casework completed during the year**

**SECTION B: CONCLUSIONS RECORDED AT INQUESTS IN 2022  
(including inquests with juries)**

	Numbers of conclusions (not treasure inquests)		
	Male	Female	Total
Killed unlawfully	0	0	0
Killed lawfully	0	0	0
Suicide	5	0	5
Attempted or self-induced abortion	0	0	0
Cause of death aggravated by lack of care, or self-neglect	0	0	0
Alcohol/Drug Related	1	0	1
Road Traffic Collision	3	0	3
Want of attention at birth	0	0	0
Deaths from industrial diseases	0	0	0
Deaths by accident or misadventure	2	4	6
Stillbirth	0	0	0
Deaths from natural causes	1	1	2
Open	1	0	1
Disasters (where inquest resumed after adjustment under Sch.1 of Coroners and Justice Act 2009)	0	0	0
Unclassified (including narrative conclusions)	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL (All conclusions)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>

**AGE OF DECEASED IN INQUEST CONCLUSIONS:**

Number of inquest conclusions returned in 2022 where age of deceased at time of death was:	
Under 1 year	0
1 to 14 years	0
15 to 24 years	3
25 to 44 years	4
45 to 64 years	7
65 years and over	4
Age not known	0

**SECTION C: INVESTIGATIONS SUSPENDED under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 which it has been decided NOT TO RESUME DURING 2022**

	Subsection under which Suspension occurs (under new regulations)				
	Sch.1 Para.1	Sch.1 Para.2	Sch.1 Para.3	Sch.1 Para.5	T
Murder	0	0	0	0	0
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Infanticide	0	0	0	0	0
Charges of causing death contrary to RTA 1988	0	0	0	0	0

Aiding, abetting, counselling, or procuring suicide	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Other criminal charges	0	0	0	0	0
Inquiry under inquiries Act 2005 (no charge)			0		0
General power to suspend (no charge)				0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Section D (X): INQUESTS in 2022</b>			
	With juries	Without juries	TOTAL
Number of inquests (excluding treasure)	0	18	18
Of which: inquests held by order of the High Court			0
Inquests quashed or amended by the High Court			0
<b>Section D (X): EXHUMATIONS IN 2022</b>			
The number of exhumations ordered under Schedule 5 paragraph 6 of the Coroners Act 2009			0
<b>Section D (X): TREASURE FINDS in 2022</b>			
Number of finds reported under the TREASURE ACT 1996			0
Number of inquests concluded (see note below)			0
Of which: Number of conclusions of treasure			0
Number of inquests on treasure Trove (only inquests on finds made before 24 Sept 1997 should be reported here)			0
<b>Section D (X): PREVENTION OF FUTURE DEATHS REPORTS SUBMITTED IN 2022</b>			
The number of Prevention of Future Deaths Reports issued in 2022 (Regardless of inquest conclusion date)			0

#### Notes

- The number of inquests into treasure concluded during 2022 must be equal to or greater than the number of verdicts of Treasure recorded in the box below it.
- Sch.1, Para.1: Criminal charges/service charges may be brought  
Sch.1, Para.2: Criminal charges/service charges have been brought  
Sch.1, Para.3: Inquiry under the inquiries Act 2005  
Sch.1, Para.5: Suspended for other reasons

#### SECTION E: TIME SPENT ON CASES

- Deaths investigated in 2022 where there was no inquest i.e. deaths reported at section A (i) (top row + 'sex not known')**

Number of cases reported at section A (i) in which certificates were issued within:

One week or less		<b>290</b>
Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	<b>20</b>
Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>		<b>26</b>
	+	
All deaths investigated where a certificate was issued, but there was no inquest	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>336</b>
No certificate issued (in section A these will have been included in the "no inquest, no PM" part of A (i)) +	+	<b>0</b>

All deaths reported in 2022 where there was no inquest, i.e. Section A (i) + cases where sex not known	=	336
--	---	-----

**2. Deaths in 2022 on which inquests are to be or were opened (even if not yet concluded) i.e. all deaths reported at Section A (ii)**

Number of cases reported at section A (ii) in which disposal certificates were issued within:

<u>Deaths in England and Wales</u>	One week or less		6
	Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	16
	Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>		0
		+	
	TOTAL CASES – England and Wales	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>22</b>
Deaths elsewhere	TOTAL CASES – Elsewhere	+	0
All deaths in 2022 on which inquests are to be or were opened i.e. Section A (II)		=	22

**3. Deaths investigated in 2022 where it is not yet known if there will be an inquest i.e. deaths reported at section A (iii)**

**Please note, this should be a snapshot of investigations open at the end of 2022**

Number of cases reported at section A (iii) in which certificates were issued within:

One week or less		10
Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	8
Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>		2
	+	
All deaths where a certificate was issued, but it not yet known an inquest will be held	<b>Subtotal if</b>	<b>20</b>
No certificate issued (in section A these will have been included in the *no PM* part of A (iii))	+	0
All deaths reported in 2022 where it is not yet known if there will be an inquest i.e. Section A (iii)	=	20

**4. Deaths on which inquests in 2022 were: (a) concluded or (b) not resumed following adjournment under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 5. (i.e. all conclusions in section B plus all charges in section C)**

Number of cases where the inquest was either concluded, or adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraph 1, 2, 3 or 5 within:

<u>Deaths in England and Wales</u>	One month or less <sup>2</sup>		2
	One to three months <sup>2</sup>		0
	Three to six months <sup>2</sup>		4
	Six to twelve months <sup>2</sup>		10
	Over twelve months <sup>2</sup>		2
		TOTAL CASES – England and Wales	
Deaths elsewhere	TOTAL CASES – Elsewhere	+	0
All deaths on which inquests were held in 2022 i.e. total of Section B and C		=	18



**5. Inquests still open or in progress at the end of 2022 (i.e. neither concluded, nor adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 5)**

Please indicate the number of inquests in progress for the following time periods:

	<b>Deaths in England and Wales</b>	<b>Deaths Elsewhere</b>
1. Less than 6 months	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
2. Over 6 months but no more than 12 months	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
3. Over 12 months but more than 2 years	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
4. Over 2 years	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Start date <sup>3</sup> of oldest case in each column	<b>12/10/2021</b>	
Please give brief descriptions of the two cases reported in the row immediately above:	<b>Financial Enquiries</b>	

**Footnotes to Section E**

1. To include cases for which certificates had not been issued by 31 January 2023.
2. For cases adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 & 5 and not resumed, time should be measured up to the date when Form 120 was issued.
3. Please check the dates are correct according to your case files. In particular, ensure the month and day have not accidentally been reversed (e.g. 4 May 2021 should appear as 04/05/21 (or 4 May 2021) and not as 05/04/2021).

















# DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONERS

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2022

**PLEASE READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING**

Please complete and return this spreadsheet by 1 March 2023 to:

Matteo Chiesa


[Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk)

If you have any problems about how this spreadsheet should be completed, please refer to the “Instructions” worksheet, or contact Matteo Chiesa at

[Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk](mailto:Coroners>Returns@justice.gov.uk)

or alternatively contact 07967 595014

**PLEASE ENTER DETAILS HERE AFTER COMPLETION**

<b>NAME:</b> <input type="text" value="Steven Lloyd"/>	<b>ADDRESS:</b> <input type="text" value="Police Station&lt;br/&gt;Aberystwyth&lt;br/&gt;Ceredigion&lt;br/&gt;SY23 1PH"/>
<b>DATE:</b> <input type="text" value="24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; February 2023"/>	<b>E-MAIL ADDRESS</b> <input type="text" value="Steve.lloyd@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk"/>
<b>TELEPHONE</b> <input type="text" value="01267 615104"/>	
<b>SOFTWARE PROVIDER</b> (Please select from dropdown options) <input type="text" value="Other"/> 	<b>FURTHER DETAILS – OTHER PROVIDER:</b> <input type="text" value="Please select software provider from the dropdown list"/> <input type="text" value="No provider"/>
Please return the completed spreadsheet by 1 March 2023 to:  Matteo Chiesa <a href="mailto:Coroners_Returns@justice.gov.uk">Coroners_Returns@justice.gov.uk</a>	

Thank you

# DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONERS

January to December 2022

<b>FULL NAME OF CORONER'S AREA</b>
<b>CEREDIGION</b>

*PLEASE READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING AND READ THE CHECKS SUMMARY BEFORE SUBMITTING*

## SECTION A1: New Casework

SECTION A: DEATHS REPORTED TO CORONER IN 2022									
	With post mortem			Without post mortem			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
(i) Deaths reported to the coroner which will not result in an inquest (whether or not a certificate of any sort is issued)	82	58	140	102	94	196	184	152	336
(ii) Deaths reported to coroners on which inquests are to be or were opened (even if not concluded)	15	3	18	2	2	4	17	5	22
(iii) Deaths reported to coroners on which inquests are under investigation and is not yet known if an inquest will be opened	11	9	20	0	0	0	11	9	20
<b>TOTAL: (i) + (ii) + (iii)</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>378</b>
(iv) Number of cases transferred out of area under Section 2 or 3 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (not to be included above, even if they include a post mortem before transfer)									6
(v) Deaths reported or referred to the coroner requiring neither inquest nor the issue of any certificate MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE "NO INQUEST NO POST MORTEM" box above, along with cases where certificates were issued. <u>For cases where sex of deceased not known, please indicate the number of such cases in the yellow cell on the right</u>									0

<b>POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS</b> – <u>NOT</u> to include cases that were later transferred out (if more than one on the same body, only details relating to the <u>FIRST PM</u> should be included in this section)	
Number ordered at STANDARD RATE	173
Number ordered at NON-STANDARD RATE	5
<b>Number</b> of PMs which included HISTOLOGY	46
Number of PMs which included TOXICOLOGY	35
Number of PMs conducted using External Examination (even if the PM included an Autopsy), Imaging (even if the PM included an Autopsy), Test on Samples – (Toxicology/Histology if not part of an Autopsy)	177
Number of PMs conducted not including an Autopsy	1
Number of PMs conducted by a HO forensic pathologist	3

Number of second PMs conducted following request by defence lawyer	0
<b>N.B. we do not require any further details of any second or subsequent PM ordered in the same body to be recorded here</b>	
Number of Out of England orders made	0
Number of deaths abroad (give details on separate page please)	0

**For deaths in state detention (or within seven days of release from State Detention) reported to the coroner in 2022,**

**Please provide a count of new cases in each of the following definitions:  
(For further details, if required, see the sheet "State Detention definitions")**

1. Prison Custody	0
2. Police Custody	0
3. Immigration removal centres	0
4. Mental Health Act detention	0
5. Residents of Probation Approved Premises	0
6. Secure training centre	0
7. Local authority secure children's homes	0
8. Release on temporary licence (ROTL)	0
9. Release from custody within previous seven days	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>

N.B. Please be aware that this data is cross-checked with National Offender Management Service. Please check these figures as any discrepancies will cause delay in processing your return

<b>Section A2: INVESTIGATIONS DISCONTINUED PRIOR TO INQUEST in 2022 under section 4(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009</b>	
The number of cases discontinued WITH Post-Mortem	33
The number of cases discontinued WITHOUT Post-Mortem	0

## **SECTION B, C and D: Casework completed during the year**

<b>SECTION B: CONCLUSIONS RECORDED AT INQUESTS IN 2022 (including inquests with juries)</b>			
	Numbers of conclusions (not treasure inquests)		
	Male	Female	Total
Killed unlawfully	0	0	0
Killed lawfully	0	0	0
Suicide	5	0	5
Attempted or self-induced abortion	0	0	0
Cause of death aggravated by lack of care, or self-neglect	0	0	0
Alcohol/Drug Related	1	0	1
Road Traffic Collision	3	0	3
Want of attention at birth	0	0	0
Deaths from industrial diseases	0	0	0
Deaths by accident or misadventure	2	4	6
Stillbirth	0	0	0
Deaths from natural causes	1	1	2
Open	1	0	1

Disasters (where inquest resumed after adjustment under Sch.1 of Coroners and Justice Act 2009)	0	0	0
Unclassified (including narrative conclusions)	0	0	0
TOTAL (All conclusions)	13	5	18
<b>AGE OF DECEASED IN INQUEST CONCLUSIONS:</b>			
Number of inquest conclusions returned in 2022 where age of deceased at time of death was:			
Under 1 year	0		
1 to 14 years	0		
15 to 24 years	3		
25 to 44 years	4		
45 to 64 years	7		
65 years and over	4		
Age not known	0		

<b>SECTION C: INVESTIGATIONS SUSPENDED under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 which it has been decided NOT TO RESUME DURING 2022</b>					
	Subsection under which Suspension occurs (under new regulations)				
	Sch.1 Para.1	Sch.1 Para.2	Sch.1 Para.3	Sch.1 Para.5	T
Murder	0	0	0	0	0
Manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Infanticide	0	0	0	0	0
Charges of causing death contrary to RTA 1988	0	0	0	0	0
Aiding, abetting, counselling, or procuring suicide	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate manslaughter	0	0	0	0	0
Other criminal charges	0	0	0	0	0
Inquiry under inquiries Act 2005 (no charge)			0		0
General power to suspend (no charge)				0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0

<b>Section D (X): INQUESTS in 2022</b>			
	With juries	Without juries	TOTAL
Number of inquests (excluding treasure)	0	18	18
Of which: inquests held by order of the High Court			0
Inquests quashed or amended by the High Court			0
<b>Section D (X): EXHUMATIONS IN 2022</b>			
The number of exhumations ordered under Schedule 5 paragraph 6 of the Coroners Act 2009			0
<b>Section D (X): TREASURE FINDS in 2022</b>			
Number of finds reported under the TREASURE ACT 1996			0
Number of inquests concluded (see note below)			0
Of which: Number of conclusions of treasure			0
Number of inquests on treasure Trove (only inquests on finds made before 24 Sept 1997 should be reported here)			0
<b>Section D (X): PREVENTION OF FUTURE DEATHS REPORTS SUBMITTED IN 2022</b>			
The number of Prevention of Future Deaths Reports issued in 2022 (Regardless of inquest conclusion date)			0

## Notes

1. The number of inquests into treasure concluded during 2022 must be equal to or greater than the number of verdicts of Treasure recorded in the box below it.

Sch.1, Para.1: Criminal charges/service charges may be brought

Sch.1, Para.2: Criminal charges/service charges have been brought

Sch.1, Para.3: Inquiry under the inquiries Act 2005

Sch.1, Para.5: Suspended for other reasons

## SECTION E: TIME SPENT ON CASES

### 1. Deaths investigated in 2022 where there was no inquest i.e. deaths reported at section A (i) (top row + 'sex not known')

Number of cases reported at section A (i) in which certificates were issued within:

One week or less		<b>290</b>
Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	<b>20</b>
Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>	+	<b>26</b>
All deaths investigated where a certificate was issued, but there was no inquest	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>336</b>
No certificate issued (in section A these will have been included in the "no inquest, no PM" part of A (i)) +	+	<b>0</b>
All deaths reported in 2022 where there was no inquest, i.e. Section A (i) + cases where sex not known	=	<b>336</b>

### 2. Deaths in 2022 on which inquests are to be or were opened (even if not yet concluded) i.e. all deaths reported at Section A (ii)

Number of cases reported at section A (ii) in which disposal certificates were issued within:

<u>Deaths in England and Wales</u>	One week or less		<b>6</b>
	Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	<b>16</b>
	Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>	+	<b>0</b>
	<b>TOTAL CASES – England and Wales</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>22</b>
Deaths elsewhere	<b>TOTAL CASES – Elsewhere</b>	+	<b>0</b>
All deaths in 2022 on which inquests are to be or were opened i.e. Section A (II)	=	<b>22</b>	

### 3. Deaths investigated in 2022 where it is not yet known if there will be an inquest i.e. deaths reported at section A (iii)

**Please note, this should be a snapshot of investigations open at the end of 2022**

Number of cases reported at section A (iii) in which certificates were issued within:

One week or less		<b>10</b>
Over a week and up to one calendar month	+	<b>8</b>
Over one calendar month <sup>1</sup>	+	<b>2</b>
All deaths where a certificate was issued, but it not yet known if an inquest will be held	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>20</b>
No certificate issued (in section A these will have been included in the *no PM* part of A (iii))	+	<b>0</b>
All deaths reported in 2022 where it is not yet known if there will be an inquest i.e. Section A (iii)	=	<b>20</b>

**4. Deaths on which inquests in 2022 were: (a) concluded or (b) not resumed following adjournment under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 5. (i.e. all conclusions in section B plus all charges in section C)**

Number of cases where the inquest was either concluded, or adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraph 1, 2, 3 or 5 within:

<u>Deaths in England and Wales</u>	One month or less <sup>2</sup>		<b>2</b>
	One to three months <sup>2</sup>		<b>0</b>
	Three to six months <sup>2</sup>		<b>4</b>
	Six to twelve months <sup>2</sup>		<b>10</b>
	Over twelve months <sup>2</sup>		<b>2</b>
	TOTAL CASES – England and Wales		<b>18</b>
Deaths elsewhere	TOTAL CASES – Elsewhere	+	<b>0</b>
All deaths on which inquests were held in 2022 i.e. total of Section B and C			<b>= 18</b>

**5. Inquests still open or in progress at the end of 2022 (i.e. neither concluded, nor adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 5)**

Please indicate the number of inquests in progress for the following time periods:

	<b>Deaths in England and Wales</b>	<b>Deaths Elsewhere</b>
1. Less than 6 months	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
2. Over 6 months but no more than 12 months	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
3. Over 12 months but more than 2 years	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
4. Over 2 years	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Start date <sup>3</sup> of oldest case in each column	<b>12/10/2021</b>	
Please give brief descriptions of the two cases reported in the row immediately above:		

**Footnotes to Section E**

1. To include cases for which certificates had not been issued by 31 January 2023.
2. For cases adjourned under Schedule 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 & 5 and not resumed, time should be measured up to the date when Form 120 was issued.
3. Please check the dates are correct according to your case files. In particular, ensure the month and day have not accidentally been reversed (e.g. 4 May 2021 should appear as 04/05/21 (or 4 May 2021) and not as 05/04/2021).















## CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Title:** Half-Year Report of Compliments and Complaints –  
between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Purpose of the report:** To provide the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a comprehensive overview of the Compliments and Complaints activity received by the Local Authority between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This report also provides information about the complaints activity referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during this reporting period.

**Reason Scrutiny have requested the information:**

For information prior to the presentation of this Half-Year Report to the Cabinet Committee Meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**Background**

This report provides information relating to the Council's Compliments and Complaints activity between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The detailed report is provided in **Appendix 1** and includes specific information on the number and type of compliments received, the different complaints stages and information surrounding performance and outcomes.

It is acknowledged that challenges remain in relation to the complexity of complaints received and there is a consistent increase in all activity managed by the Council's Complaints and FOI Team.

**Brief Overview:**

**171** Compliments were received

**180** Enquiries were processed by the Complaints & FOI Service

**116** Complaints were received: **Stage 1 = 68**                      **Stage 2 = 48**

**19** 'Contacts' received via the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

**523** FOI & EIR requests processed by the Complaints & FOI Service

**Current Situation**

- It is evident that more complaints were received in this reporting period than in earlier years. Efforts are ongoing to continue positive engagement with all service areas to resolve complaints efficiently and effectively.
- The service continues to deal with a significant number of 'enquiries' – though these will normally be referred to services for direct resolution. To clarify, an 'enquiry' is the term assigned to concerns that are either premature and do not yet meet the threshold of a 'complaint', or they are concerns that are received whereby the complaints policies do not apply (i.e. 'properly made decisions', complaints that are out of time, or issues that should be addressed via other means etc.). Therefore, a comprehensive and meaningful response is still warranted.

- A great deal of work continues to be made by the Complaints and FOI Team to prevent Stage 1 complaints from escalating to Stage 2 unnecessarily, on account that it was not possible to respond within the prescribed timescale of ten-working-days.
- Compliance with timescales under Stage 2 was also deemed to be an area requiring attention, though this was attributed largely to the challenges faced by the Complaints and FOI Team in light of increases in workloads.

**Areas to focus on**

- Improving performance in respect of meeting prescribed timescales that are set out in complaints policies and legislation
- Reinforce the principle that complaints should be owned by all staff and services throughout the Council
- Continuing with open, transparent, and citizen-centred approach to resolving concerns

**Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.**

No IIA has been completed because there is no service change proposed within this report.

**Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

**Long term:** N/A  
**Collaboration:** N/A  
**Involvement:** N/A  
**Prevention:** N/A  
**Integration:** N/A

**Recommendation(s):**

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of this report in advance of its presentation at the Cabinet meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**Reasons for decision:**

To ensure Members are aware of the performance of the Authority in respect of Compliments and Complaints.

**Contact Name:** Marie-Neige Hadfield

**Designation:** Complaints and Freedom of Information Manager

**Date of Report:** 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Acronyms:**

**EIR:** Environmental Information Regulations  
**FOI:** Freedom of Information  
**PSOW:** Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

**Compliments and Complaints Half Year Report**  
**1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This report will provide information relating to the numbers of compliments and complaints that were received by the Council during the period 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023. **Section 2** of this report provides information relating to compliments received and **Section 3** shows some trends, themes and performance regarding the numbers, timescales and outcomes of Complaints received. **Section 4** gives details of all cases involving the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (“the Ombudsman”). **Section 5** provides a Summary and Conclusions of the data provided in the report.

**2. COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED**

**2.1 Compliments**

All compliments received from service-users are recorded and monitored on a regular basis and should be viewed as an opportunity to share good practice wherever possible. Compliments should be responded to individually and shared with the people directly involved.

**2.2** The table below shows the number of compliments that were recorded by each Service during the first half of 2023/24.

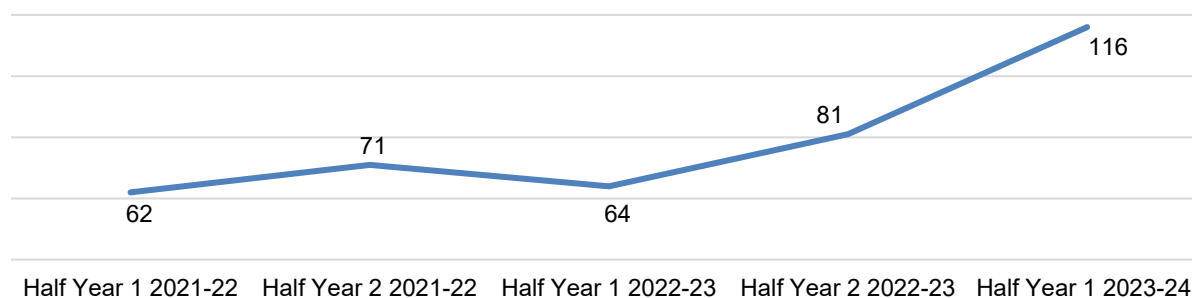
<b>Service</b>	<b>Half Year 1 2023/24</b>
Finance & Procurement	2
Corporate	2
Economy & Regeneration	2
Customer Contact	2
Schools & Culture	5
Policy, Performance & Public Protection	6
Highways & Environmental Services	19
Porth Cynnal	21
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	45
Porth Gofal	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>

**3. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED**

**3.1 Total number of complaints received**

The chart below shows the total number of complaints received during the first half of 2023/24 that were processed in accordance with the two-stage complaints policies. Comparisons are given in respect of 2021/22 and 2022/23.

## Total Number of Complaints Received



### 3.2 Number of complaints made by stage

The number of complaints made against the Council under each stage of the Complaints Policy for 2021/22, 2022/23 and the first half of 2023/24 in the table below.

Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Half Year 1 2021/22	32	30	<b>62</b>
Half Year 2 2021/22	41	30	<b>71</b>
Half Year 1 2022/23	39	25	<b>64</b>
Half Year 2 2022/23	58	23	<b>81</b>
Half Year 1 2023/24	68	48	<b>116</b>

### 3.3 Welsh Language Complaints

During the first half of 2023/24 the Council received two complaints specifically relating to the provision (or lack thereof) of Welsh Language services across the Council. One complaint was in relation to Housing Services, and the other related to Integrated Triage and Assessment Services.

### 3.4 Number of complaints received by Service during reporting period

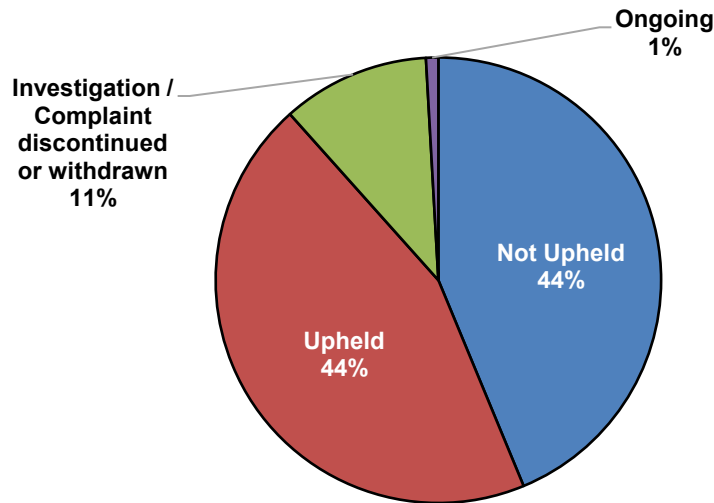
See below the number of complaints received in accordance with service area.

Service	Half Year 1 2023/24
Customer Contact & ICT	2
Democratic Services	1
Economy & Regeneration	26
Finance & Procurement	6
Highways & Environmental Services	23
Legal and Governance Service	-
People and Organisation Service	-
Policy, Performance & Public Protection	12
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	14
Porth Cynnal	15
Porth Gofal	8
Schools & Lifelong Learning	3
Multi-Service	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>



### 3.5 Complaint Outcomes

See below the outcomes recorded against all complaints for the reporting period.



### 3.6 Timescales

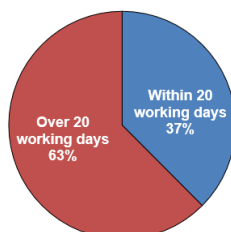
The Council is required to respond to all complaints in a timely manner and in any event, within the timescales stipulated by policy. It is important to note that there is a degree of flexibility afforded under Stage 2, particularly in the interests of ensuring thorough and robust investigations are undertaken, which often take longer to complete.

**3.7 Stage 1** – A total of **68** Stage 1 complaints were dealt with during the reporting period. Under the corporate policy, Stage 1 complaints should be completed within **10 working days**, and under the Social Services complaints procedures complaints should be completed within **15 working days** which includes the offer of a meeting / discussion with the relevant service manager. A total of **49** of the **54** corporate complaints at this stage were addressed within the prescribed timescales. **5** complaints should have been escalated to Stage 2 when the ten-working-day timescale was exceeded, however, the response under Stage 1 was issued to these complaints on the 11<sup>th</sup> working day, and complainants had an opportunity to escalate their concerns to Stage 2 of the policy should they feel that their complaint was not suitably addressed.

**3.8 Escalation from Stage 1 to Stage 2 due to timescale** – Of the **40** corporate complaints dealt with at Stage 2 during this reporting period, **14** were automatically escalated from Stage 1 due to exceeding the 10-working day timescale. This equates to **35%** of all corporate Stage 2 complaints investigated.

**3.9 Stage 2** – A total of **48** complaints were received at Stage 2. Of these, **8** were managed under the statutory Social Services Policy, which allows **25 working days** from the 'Start Date' as opposed to 20 working days under the corporate Concerns and Complaints procedure. Performance in respect of the corporate policy is provided below. With regard to the **8** Social Services complaints, **two** cases were discontinued, **one** case remains open, **one** case was answered within the Statutory timescale. The remaining **4** cases took longer than the allotted time to conclude which is permitted, providing the Statutory Director of Social Services provides written approval for an extension to be given.

Performance with Stage 2 Timescales (corporate policy)



## 4. COMPLAINTS MADE TO OMBUDSMAN WALES

- 4.1** The Ombudsman’s expectation is that complainants will exhaust the Council’s own complaints procedures before contacting their office for independent consideration of their complaint. However, in exceptional circumstances the Ombudsman does have discretion to undertake a direct investigation. Usually, complaints which have not yet been considered by the Council will be recorded by the Ombudsman’s office as **‘Premature’** contacts and these will be referred back to the Council to investigate under its own complaints procedures.
- 4.2** As a matter of course, all formal responses issued at Stage 2 of the Council’s complaints procedures (corporate and Social Services policies) include advice that complainants can refer their case to the Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with the Council’s findings, or the handling of their complaint.
- 4.3** The Council has limited control over service-users contacting the Ombudsman directly, though this would normally be addressed during staff training (i.e. advising people about how they can complain if they are unhappy with the service provided).
- 4.4** It is useful to note that the Ombudsman provides data according to the number of *‘contacts’* received by service-users as well as the number of *‘cases closed’* during the reporting period. This method will account for any discrepancies in the number of cases being reported on (particularly if some straddle multiple reporting periods).
- 4.5** **Number of complaints made to the Ombudsman in Half Year 1 2023/24 by primary subject**

Subject	No. of Ombudsman complaints 2022/23	No. of Ombudsman complaints Half Year 1 2023/24
Licensing	1	
Education	1	
Children's Social Services	1	
Communities, facilities, recreation and leisure	1	
Roads & transport	1	1
Planning & Building Control	2	5
Environment & Environmental Health	2	
Housing	3	1
Various Other	4	1* (PROW)
Adult Social Services	5	1
Complaint Handling	14	9
Waste & Refuse	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>

*\*Categorisation of complaints made to the Ombudsman in Half Year 1 2023/24 are subject to change once the Annual Letter is received for 2023/24\**

**4.6** The Ombudsman received **19** complaints about the Council during the course of this reporting period. The Ombudsman has not commenced an investigation into any of these cases. Of the 19 complaints referred to the Ombudsman, **4** cases were closed after initial consideration; **2** cases were deemed to be out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction; **8** cases were deemed 'Premature' and were referred back to the Council for investigation; and **5** Early Resolution agreements were reached, in order for the Council to be able to resolve the complaint to the Ombudsman's satisfaction.

#### **4.7 Ombudsman Cases resulting in Early Resolution**

As referred to above, there were no formal investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman for this reporting period. However, **5** Early Resolution agreements were reached. In these instances, the Ombudsman provides the Council with an opportunity to review its management of the case and agree to a course of action that should resolve the complaint.

## **5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS**

**5.1** In summary, the main headlines of this report are as follows:

- **171** Compliments were received
- **116** Complaints were received: **Stage 1 = 68**      **Stage 2 = 48**
- **19** 'Contacts' received via Ombudsman Wales
- **180** Enquiries were processed by the Complaints & FOI Service
- **523** FOI & EIR requests processed by the Complaints & FOI Team

**5.2** The number of complaints received during this reporting period (116) is a significant increase compared to the number received in both the first and second half of 2022/23 (64 and 81 respectively). This is a positive reflection of the work being done to ensure **all** complaints are recorded, as there were concerns that the high level of Ombudsman referrals could be indicative of missed opportunities to investigate and resolve some concerns as complaints.

**5.3** The number of enquiries managed by the Complaints and FOI Service has decreased slightly in the first half of 2023/24 compared with the first half of 2022/23, with a decrease of 12%. However, the number of enquiries received in the first half of 2023/24 (180) has remained in line with the number received in the second half of 2022/23 (183).

**5.4** Stage 1 complaints have risen by 29 (an increase of 74%) compared with the first half of 2022/23. There was also an increase in the number of complaints investigated at Stage 2 (an increase of 23, or 92%). Again, this demonstrates that work is ongoing to ensure complaints are suitably identified and resolved in a robust manner.

**5.5** As referred to previously, the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman has increased slightly compared to the number referred within the first half of 2022/23. 4 complaints were closed after initial consideration (21%); 2 cases were deemed to be out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction (11%), and 8 cases were deemed 'Premature' and were referred back to the Council for investigation (42%). The remaining 5 cases were resolved by way of 'Early Resolution' (26%).

**5.6** A smaller proportion of complaints were upheld during the first half of 2023/24, 44% compared with 54% of all complaints received in 2022/23. 44% of complaints received during this reporting period were not upheld, which is an increase in proportion compared with 2022/23 where 32% of complaints were not upheld.

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## CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Corporate Resources & Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 12/03/24

**Title:** Digital Strategy

**Purpose of the report:** To introduce new Digital Strategy 2024-2030

**Reason Scrutiny have requested the information:**  
To review new strategy

### **Background**

The Customer Contact, ICT and Digital service have developed a new digital strategy following the expiry of the 2018 ICT and Digital Strategy.

As part of the process of preparing this strategy we have carried out discussions across the authority, a Digital maturity workshop supported by WLGA and a Data Driven organisation carried out by a consultancy and Wales Audit have carried out an audit into our Digital Strategy thinking which has helped shape requirements. We have also taken into account core strategies across Wales.

The strategy is long term and looks to deliver three bi-annual digital plans which can deliver the strategic outcomes outlined within the strategy.

The strategy seeks to deliver a “Digitally Confident Ceredigion a county which is confident to develop, innovate and deliver digital services in partnership with our communities. Communities which are connected, engaged and ready to benefit from them”.

The strategy aims to deliver these outcomes under three strategic pillars:

1. Digital Organisation
2. Digital Residents
3. Digital Communities

The strategy is designed to support the national digital missions and to support Ceredigion to deliver on our 4 corporate objectives.

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses, and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green, and well-connected communities

The strategy will see digital embedded across all services and strategies to ensure we can provide innovative and efficient services for all. We will deliver the following aims:

- Develop a digitally skilled, confident workforce with the capacity and skills to adapt and innovate.
- Support the community to be digitally confident, able to access and benefit from digital services.
- Support delivery of digital connectivity improvements for the whole county.
- Provide the council and its partners with sustainable, resilient, and secure ICT services.
- Support the development and delivery of a socially prescribed model which creates caring and innovative communities.
- Support the delivery of Technology Enable Care solutions which enable independence.
- Develop Digital leadership skills across the workforce.
- Provide our staff with the tools and systems to work efficiently and effectively.
- Deliver digitally mature services which reduce bureaucracy, improve efficiency to deliver real financial benefits.
- Deliver digital solutions which support the delivery of Net Zero.
- Work to ensure security and resilience underpins all we do.
- Make better use of data to support decisions and become a data driven organisation.
- Provide citizens with 24/7 access to services via a My Account and online services.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.**  
Yes

### **Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

**Long term:** The strategy will deliver digital improvements across all areas of Ceredigion over the long term and is planned over the next 6 years.

**Collaboration:** The strategy looks to deliver service improvement with the collaboration of all services, key partners and clearly outlines the expectations of citizen involvement too.

**Involvement:** Public consultation will be undertaken and citizen involvement in developments sought.

**Prevention:** The aim of the strategy is to support improved service delivery across the organisation and to offer better more efficient services long term.

**Integration:** Through implementation of the strategy and the biannual strategic plans all services, and partners will be involved in delivering integrated solutions.

**Recommendation(s):**

- To recommend the approval of the Digital Strategy 2024 -2030 by Cabinet
- To recommend the strategy for public consultation.

**Reasons for decision:**

**INSERT TEXT**

**Contact Name:** Alan Morris

**Designation:** Corporate Lead Officer – Customer Contact, ICT and Digital

**Date of Report:** 12/03/2024

**Acronyms:**

ICT – Information Communications and Technology



# Digital Strategy 2024-2030

*"A digitally confident Ceredigion"*



**DYSGU PERTHYN LLWYDDO BYW  
LEARN BELONG SUCCEED LIVE**



## Document control

### Version History

Alan Morris	First Draft	26/10/2023
Alan Morris	Redraft following feedback	10/01/2024
Alan Morris	Final draft	23/02/2024

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## Foreword

*Mae Ceredigion bob amser yn darparu gwasanaethau gydag ethos gynhwysol. Mae'r strategaeth newydd hon yn canolbwyntio ar gyflwyno datblygiad digidol cynaliadwy, hirdymor ar draws yr holl wasanaethau. Bydd yn annog arweinyddiaeth ddigidol ac yn galluogi'r cyngor i barhau i ddarparu gwasanaethau rhagorol i bobl Ceredigion."*

*Ceredigion consistently provides services with an inclusive ethos. This new strategy focuses on delivering sustainable, long-term digital development across all services. It will encourage digital leadership and enable the council to continue to provide excellent services to the people of Ceredigion."*

Councillor Catrin M S Davies, Ceredigion County Council Cabinet Member responsible for Customer Contact, ICT and Digital



*Councillor Catrin M S Davies*

## The National Agenda and External Drivers

This strategy has been developed with wide range of external and internal influences. We have carried out analysis of our strengths and weaknesses, external reviews and investigated our maturity in data and digital technology. We have considered national and local strategies and polled the opinions and advice of partner organisations.

We have learnt from the guidance and discovery work from organisations such as SOCITM, WLGA, GDS and CDPS amongst others, but we must also accept the difficult financial challenges and limited resources available to deliver change.

We will seek formal feedback through public consultation to help ensure we are considering the whole community needs.

*The Growing Mid Wales Board's vision for Mid Wales is to become:*

*'An enterprising and distinctive region delivering economic growth driven by innovation, skills, connectivity, and more productive jobs supporting prosperous and bilingual communities.'*

Key driving policies which have influenced this strategy include:

- Ceredigion Council Strategy 2022-2027
- [Welsh Digital Strategy and the 6 Missions](#)
  - digital services
  - digital inclusion
  - digital skills
  - digital economy
  - digital connectivity
  - data and collaboration
- Wellbeing and Future Generations
- The Government Digital Service (GDS)
- TEC Strategy
- Hywel Dda Digital Strategy



## “A digitally confident Ceredigion”

***Our vision sees a county which is confident to develop, innovate and deliver digital services in partnership with our communities, who are connected, engaged and ready to benefit from them.***

Our strategy is designed to deliver this vision statement and to support the national digital missions and to support Ceredigion to deliver on our 4 corporate objectives.

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses, and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green, and well-connected communities

Our vision will see digital embedded across all services and strategies to ensure we can provide innovative and efficient services for all. We will deliver the following aims:

- Develop a digitally skilled, confident workforce with the capacity and skills to adapt and innovate.
- Support the community to be digitally confident, able to access and benefit from digital services.
- Support delivery of digital connectivity improvements for the whole county.
- Provide the council and its partners with sustainable, resilient, and secure ICT services.
- Support the development and delivery of a socially prescribed model which creates caring and innovative communities.
- Support the delivery of Technology Enable Care solutions which enable independence.
- Develop Digital leadership skills across the workforce.
- Provide our staff with the tools and systems to work efficiently and effectively.
- Deliver digitally mature services which reduce bureaucracy, improve efficiency to deliver real financial benefits.
- Deliver digital solutions which support the delivery of Net Zero.
- Work to ensure security and resilience underpins all we do.
- Make better use of data to support decisions and become a data driven organisation.
- Provide citizens with 24/7 access to services via a My Account and online services.

## Strategy construction

To offer long term strategy in the IT & digital field can be a difficult challenge, the speed of development and new opportunities mean we need to be reactive and flexible to change. Our strategy must consider future needs and meet the sustainable development principles and the five ways of working.

To achieve this, we have built a long-term strategy based on pillars and principles supported with bi-annual plans and a review process to reflect and develop ongoing plans within the timeframe of the strategy.

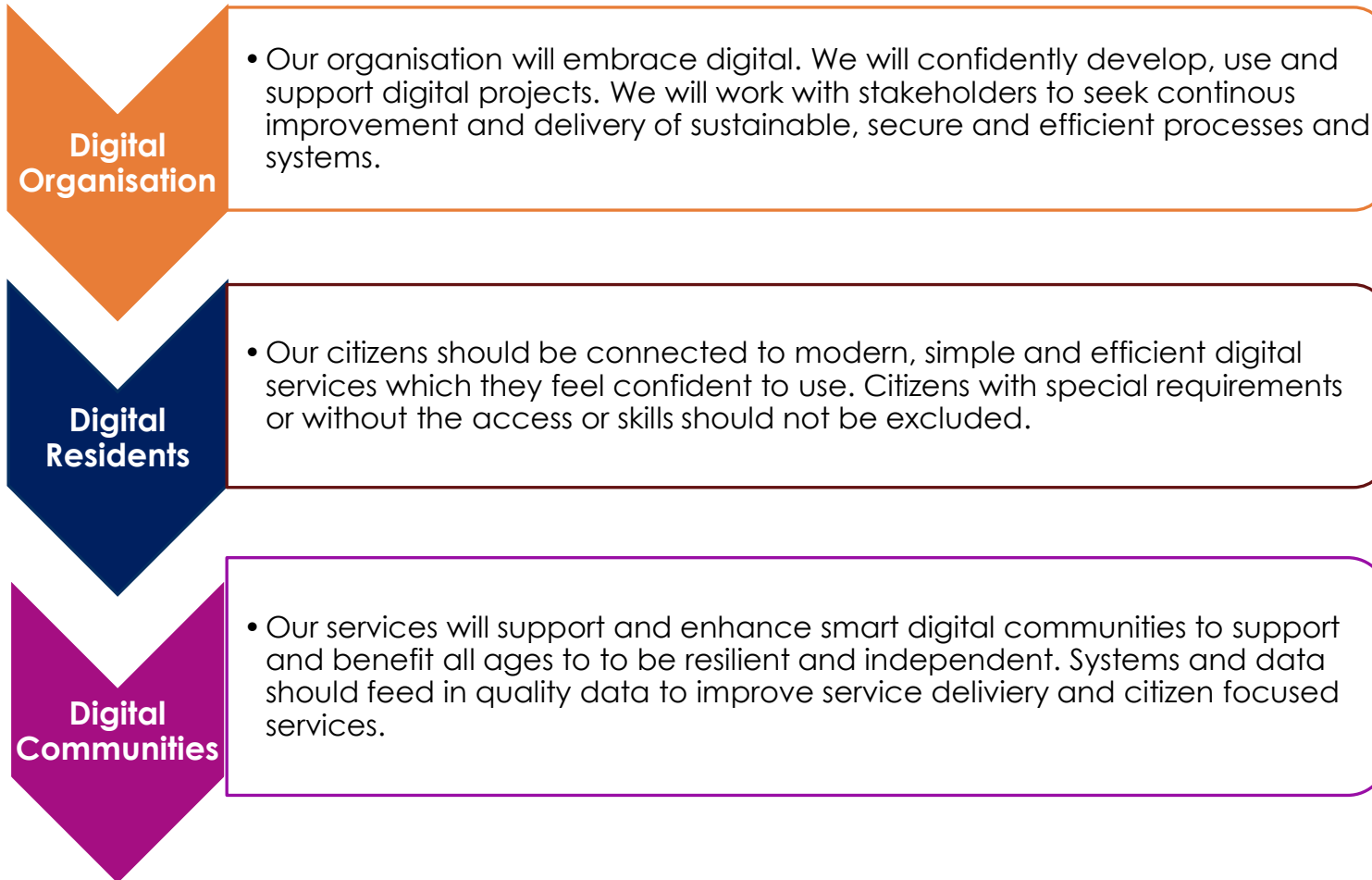
It is vital in a fast-moving landscape such as digital that we embed review processes to ensure the organisation can adjust to embrace new trends and technologies as they come to market.

For this strategy we are considering a long-term view of 6 years but will underpin this with the first 2 years of plans to support delivery of the aims.



## Our Strategic pillars

We have broken our strategy into 3 core pillars, outlining priority areas to support.

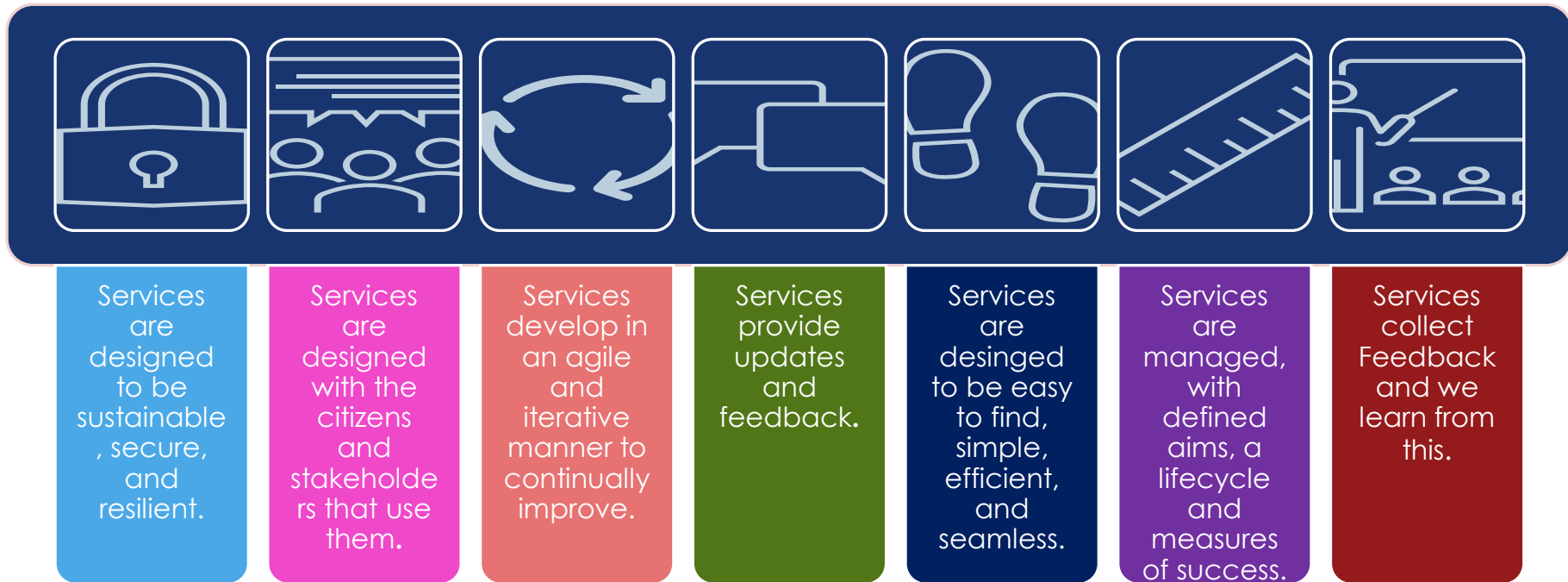


## We deliver Services.

A service is something that helps someone do something.

As a council most of our work is delivering services to citizens and we must ensure these develop with the needs of the community and the technology of the time. Continual service improvement is essential if we are to take advantage of digital technologies to improve performance and deliver more efficient services to citizens. Improving the digital confidence of staff is essential so that they can improve process design and efficiency within their own teams.

When developing digital services and solutions, we will ensure they are designed around these seven principles.





## Digital Organisation

*How does Ceredigion become a more confident digital organisation? An organisation able to lead and deliver digital projects and better support the citizens and communities of Ceredigion and Mid Wales.*

*Through research and engagement with stakeholders we have identified the following strategic outcomes to deliver.*

Strategy Outcomes	How do we measure progress?
<p><b>Staff Development and Structure</b></p> <p>We need trained and digitally skilled staff to design and maintain digital services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have confidence in their skills and use of technology.</li> <li>• Increased number of dedicated digital roles support digital project delivery and ensure projects are managed effectively.</li> <li>• Workforce resources are adjusted to ensure technology can be embraced to support a productive workforce.</li> <li>• Organisational barriers do not create siloed services and instead support the "Team Ceredigion" ethos.</li> <li>• Services are designed around the user and consider user feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Confidence survey</li> <li>• Digital Staff training events attended.</li> <li>• Feedback from Events</li> <li>• Training Budget</li> <li>• Digital maturity of services</li> <li>• Digital Skills audit</li> </ul>
<p><b>ICT Foundations</b></p> <p>Maintain and develop ICT foundations to support digital delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT systems and infrastructure are reviewed and monitored to ensure it remains appropriate for demand.</li> <li>• Computer hardware has a managed refresh programme to ensure all staff have the right tools to do the job.</li> <li>• Systems are fit for purpose to allow staff to work digitally with efficiency.</li> <li>• Opportunities to converge technologies are sought to reduce duplication and streamline our technology estate.</li> <li>• Information and records are stored and managed securely and in line with information governance regulations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service desk calls</li> <li>• Secure Score</li> <li>• Exposure score</li> <li>• User survey results</li> </ul>

- Vulnerability management is proactive with software vulnerabilities managed and patched in line with industry standards.
- ICT services are resilient, reliable and have capacity to support a productive workforce.
- Servers and infrastructure are maintained, and the cloud is utilised pragmatically.
- ICT supports the digital agenda with clear planned developments.

### Data Driven Organisation

Our organisation should develop a data driven culture, where decisions are based on strong data. Data should drive decision making, strategy and improve performance and satisfaction.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance metrics are carefully set to drive performance and improvement.</li> <li>• Leadership sets expectations that decisions are anchored by data.</li> <li>• Data dashboard and analysis can be developed quickly and meet service needs.</li> <li>• Data Silos have been broken down to ensure data across the organisation can be used.</li> <li>• Key identifiers link most major systems so that core data can be trusted and data quality improved.</li> <li>• Data quality is managed and there are accurate records of data processing leading to improved data governance.</li> <li>• Our workforce has Power Bi Skills and can utilise Dashboards for all key business areas.</li> <li>• Data specialists can access defined, trusted data sets to support rapid development.</li> <li>• Open Data is routinely published for wider reuse and reduces FOI burden.</li> <li>• Data pipelines (automation) are created to maintain clear, timely and accurate core data sets for accurate analysis.</li> <li>• Procurement of new systems support open standards. Systems support secure API standards, hold key identifiers which will improve collaborative working and sharing of data.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A data dashboard available for every service</li> <li>• Data quality indicators for every core system</li> <li>• Number of data sources defined and available as open data.</li> <li>• Number of defined core data fact</li> <li>• Range of data quality indicators</li> <li>• FOIs directed to open data.</li> <li>• Number of validated customer accounts</li> <li>• Number of validated accounts cross referenced to other accounts.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### Digital Leadership and Skills

Digital leadership is about mastering technology, delivering change and being aware of possibilities.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical vision, strategy, oversight, and governance is delivered from the centre allowing leaders across services develop and deliver independently within those boundaries.</li> <li>• A Digital project board monitors and approves delivery of technical projects.</li> <li>• Leaders are confident in their role to deliver digital projects and innovate.</li> <li>• Leaders can demonstrate business analysis skills and have a holistic view of the organisation and have the opportunities and confidence to seek change.</li> <li>• Leaders have data skills which allow them to access analysis and make data informed decisions.</li> <li>• Leaders are product rather than project centric, focusing on long term development of products which evolve as technology does.</li> <li>• Leaders can design and implement strategies which are citizen focused.</li> <li>• Staffing structures and capacity support the digital agenda to improve services and outcomes.</li> <li>• Leaders understand and consider Service Design principles.</li> <li>• Leaders review processes and seek efficiency and continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Leaders use consistent high-quality communications and Social Media posts to improve communication with service users.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTE Staff with digital roles</li> <li>• Range of feedback</li> <li>• Newsletter registrations</li> <li>• Engagement registrations</li> <li>• Number of newsletters and social media posts</li> <li>• Project performance data</li> <li>• Digital embedded in strategies</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Cyber Security and resilience

Digital security is fundamental to the trust and reputation of an organisation and must be defended.

The [Cyber Assessment Framework](#) (CAF) is being prepared as the default standard for Government. We will work with the Welsh and UK government to implement the CAF as the standard as it evolves to suit local government needs.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security Event and Incident Management (SEIM) in place</li> <li>• Automated monitoring and remediation for simple events with reporting measures in place.</li> <li>• Playbooks are in place to support responses on expected events.</li> <li>• Improved security posture supporting current threat levels and reduced risk from non-state actors.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAF scoring</li> <li>• Core Policies and procedures in place and audited.</li> <li>• Microsoft Secure &amp; Exposure scores</li> <li>• Security Operation Centre (SOC) measures</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

- Resilience planning and response measures are evidenced with robust processes and governance arrangements.
- All suppliers & contracts routinely vetted to ensure resilience and ongoing security.

### Net Zero Support

Wales has committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The digital strategy will support our drive to Net Zero.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced Incoming and outgoing post through improved digital channels.</li> <li>• Reduced travelling through improved digital channels, communication, and hybrid meeting options.</li> <li>• Monitor and decrease energy use in the running of building, systems, data centres and equipment.</li> <li>• Reduce energy usage through Increased use of IOT, Data monitoring and analysis to detect issues and highlight usage.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incoming and Outgoing mail</li> <li>• Data centre energy use</li> <li>• Energy metrics &amp; reporting</li> <li>• Milage Claims</li> <li>• Digital maturity of all services</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Digital Service Maturity

Ceredigion offers citizens hundreds of different services, most of which have a digital option and need to be continually improved to meet expectations, reduce complexity, and improve efficiency.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service managers are clear over the services they offer and carry our digital maturity assessments to support a continued improvement plan.</li> <li>• Services users are consulted, and good service design principles are followed.</li> <li>• Selected Citizens attend Citizen workshops to help shape service delivery.</li> <li>• Feedback is collected from all services and analysed.</li> <li>• Digital leaders are aware of the design service work of GDS, WLGA Digital and CDPS. Leaders ensure consistency and plan to services standards.</li> <li>• Digital Staff training ensures core digital staff can undertake Accessibility. UX &amp; CX design and consultation effectively.</li> <li>• Leaders discuss the ethical and data protection considerations as technology evolves and processes change.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service register</li> <li>• Digital Maturity Matrix</li> <li>• User Feedback scores</li> <li>• Number of Citizen workshops</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### Customer Contact

Search engines are the front door to most services, but our website will be the first stop for information, guidance whether delivered directly, via AI assistants or search engines.

- Citizens can access all services which are inclusive and bilingual.
- Increased number and quality of channels for customers to interact with us.
- Information and guidance content is designed for humans, search engines and AI tools to digest.
- Services are designed to suit the user, easy to find and easy understand.
- Identity is managed to ensure secure sharing of information and improved communication.
- Face to face customer service staff are available to support those digitally excluded or who need support to access digital services.
- Citizens can book an appointment to meet with service support staff online to discuss their issues and get support.

- Customer Complaints and compliments
- Enquiry Satisfaction
- Newsletter readership
- Social Media analytics
- Website Analytics
- My Account usage
- Face to Face metrics

## Digital Resident

*How do residents engage and collaborate with a digital organisation? How do we support the citizens of Ceredigion to access our services digitally?*

Strategy Outcomes	Measures
<b>Digital Self Service</b>	
A secure personal portal should allow communication and access to backend services 24/7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Account is iteratively developed, and the corporate website supports ongoing opportunities to self-support and interact with services 24/7</li> <li>• Number of citizens interacting with the council via MyAccount increased.</li> <li>• Large number of useful services available via My Account (For example, Council Tax statement, apply for council tax reduction, join a library, or update foster care record, parental portal and more.)</li> <li>• Digital connectors support citizens to gain confidence accessing services online.</li> <li>• Libraries can support the public with basic digital queries.</li> <li>• Most council services have a mature digital service allowing self-service and electronic communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My Account registered users</li> <li>• % of Ceredigion Adults with a MyAccount</li> <li>• Number of enquires recorded via MyAccount.</li> <li>• Number of logins per Month</li> </ul>
<b>Channel Shift</b>	
Most customer contacts are via Telephone and Email. We want citizens to use a variety of channels and will see an Increased range and split of communication via different channels.	
<p>Additional channels including AI Chatbots will be explored as technology improves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chat channel on Website and MyAccount to allow easy access to support online.</li> <li>• Video call appointments for Customer service or contact with back-office staff can be booked and managed online.</li> <li>• Chatbot and AI tools to help signpost to digital resources and provide out of hours support are available.</li> <li>• New technology to improve customer interaction is investigated and assessed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of enquiries per channel</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction</li> <li>• % of enquiries closed on first contact</li> </ul>

- Reduced percentage of enquiries to telephone channel has given contact staff time back to support citizens in new ways.

### Newsletter and Engagement

Proactively keeping Citizens informed about new services, service changes and ways to support themselves is key to driving our corporate strategy forward.

- Citizens can sign up and receive regular newsletters and service updates.
- Citizens are effectively encouraged to partake in local democracy and engagement opportunities.
- Local democracy is strengthened through opportunities to attend committee meetings virtually, view streams of the meetings after the event, and to follow the democratic process.
- There is a clear and consistent Digital Brand across all communications and social media which drives engagement.
- The Council website is modern, engaging, accessible and promotes our corporate values and strategy.

- Newsletters delivered.
- Social Media followers
- Engagement Responses
- Website Views and analysis

### Citizen involvement in Design of services

All service should meet users' needs and be designed for them not our internal services.

Citizen involvement is essential when seeking to improve public services, expand community engagement, and increase the level of public confidence in local government.

- Digital staff champion user focused design
- User feedback is routinely collected and analysed.
- Users are invited to Citizen workshops to help design new services.
- Accessibility testing is standard practice with services.
- The corporate website maintains compliance with latest web accessibility standards.

- User focus sessions and feedback
- User feedback
- Survey Responses

**Electronic payments**

Processing Cash digitally improves security and the speed and back-office processes for reconciliation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All services designed to be cashless by default.</li><li>• Increased direct debit payments.</li><li>• Cheques are no longer accepted.</li><li>• Cash payment options remain for those unable to pay via other methods.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cash income values</li><li>• Cheque payment values</li><li>• Direct Debit payment values</li></ul> |
|--|--|



## Digital Community

*How does the community benefit from improved digital collaboration? How do we develop initiatives to better develop and support our wider community to be more resilient?*

Strategy Outcomes	Measures
<p><b>Supporting the wider community</b> Connectivity underpins everything digital.</p> <p>We will support and collaborate with the Growing Mid Wales Growth Deal to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased percentage of properties able to receive ultrafast / superfast broadband.</li> <li>• Increased coverage and usability of 4G and 5G mobile networks.</li> <li>• Increased coverage and greater use of IOT and Low power wide area networks (LPWAN) across the county.</li> <li>• Increased coverage from Public Wi-Fi</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of Ceredigion properties with access to super-fast broadband</li> <li>• % of Ceredigion landmass with 4G or better coverage</li> <li>• GMW Digital targets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support for businesses</b> We aim to boost the economy in Ceredigion and need to support workstreams which develop Ceredigion for businesses and community groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services to business are available via business functions on My Account.</li> <li>• My Account Business functions support integration with partners such as health, police, and other support agencies.</li> <li>• Business confidence in the use of digital technology is improved.</li> <li>• Business support is managed via dedicated CRM features which allow customer service staff to support businesses more effectively.</li> <li>• Businesses are involved in the redesign of business focused services to meet their needs and reduce bureaucracy.</li> <li>• The council has improved data and analysis to help support our business sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of businesses registered with Clic.</li> <li>• Feedback from businesses on support services.</li> <li>• Analysis of business data</li> <li>• Number of My Account Business users</li> <li>• Analysis of survey responses</li> </ul>

- Bi-Annual business digital survey to understand evolving business needs over the course of the strategy.

### Health and Social Care Record

Support services are improved when we know the clients record and history. This understanding speeds up process and supports better decision making.

Support the Through age Wellbeing strategy through ensuring:

- Data quality across systems is measured and improved to allow the sharing of data across health and social care.
- There is interoperability between systems, supporting API access to enable collaboration and better data analysis across all services.
- Support for a Wales wide Health and Social care record is in place.
- All social care involvements are tracked and monitored corporately and recorded in core systems to allow sharing.

- Percentage of Client records with matched NHS Number
- Data Quality metrics
- Percentage of CRM records matched with back-office systems.

### Socially prescribed model

Non-medical factors are reported to account for 80% of health outcomes.

Addressing non-medical needs is increasingly recognised as important to support health and wellbeing and reduce burden on health and social care.

- Digital tools are used to signpost citizens to support services.
- Data analysis help identify early opportunities to support citizens.
- Digital connectors support citizens to access services digitally.
- Data analysis helps identify opportunities for micro business development and to improve support for service users.

- Number of citizens accessing signposted services

### Technology Enabled Care (TEC)

Technology across the care sector can improve performance and support citizens to have a better quality of life and remain independent.

- Independent living centre showroom supports and assists the public with digital signposting TEC devices and solutions which can support citizens.

- Visitors and clients supported.
- Number of Items sold and distributed to users.

- Telecare services in Ceredigion are fully 'digitally enabled' ahead of the 2025 deadline.
- Trails with new technology are carried out routinely and where appropriate are show cased and / or distributed from TEC showroom.
- Technology Enabled Care Services and Equipment deliver consistent business intelligence data to support measurable outcomes.
- Business Intelligence tracks and improves citizen care outcomes.

- Feedback from service users and families
- Data analysis from sensor and equipment data

### Education

Continue build on and support the All-Wales Hwb Programme and ensure resilient and sustainable ICT provision across schools

Support all schools across the region through our ICT support and development SLA.

- All SLA schools have a sustainable ICT Development Plan
- Schools' connectivity capacity is suitable and supports ongoing digital learning needs.
- The new curriculum is effectively supported with ICT and Digital resources and skills.

- Percentage of Development plans in place
- Connectivity / Capacity figures

### Digital Inclusion

Ensuring the public are not digitally excluded.

Citizens can be excluded from digital services for many reasons, reducing exclusion from digital services will be targeted with the following actions.

- Increased range and quantity of ICT Equipment in libraries.
- Increased coverage of free Wi-Fi in town and community centres.
- Digital services meet accessibility standards.
- Adult learning / community connector agents support those to increase digital confidence.
- Library and customer contact staff can support citizens with basic digital tasks.
- Development of Open Access Agreements
- Processes improved to support faster delivery of new connectivity projects from Mobile Network Operators or connectivity providers.
- Consideration of all service users are considered when developing services with Integrated Impact Assessments undertaken where appropriate.

- Town Wi-Fi Coverage
- Wi-Fi connection counts
- Accessibility score
- Number of Open Access agreement Nodes in place.
- Connectivity coverage metrics

## Proposed Governance & Delivery

This Digital Strategy will be overseen by the New Ways of Working (NWOW) project board, which will include a “Digital Champion” from each of the 13 Service areas. The chair of the NWOW Project board, with the support of a project manager, will oversee the delivery of the strategy and ensure that progress against the strategy and underlying service delivery plans is reported to the Leadership Group and Corporate Performance Board.

The delivery of the strategy will require all services to continue to iterate and develop their service delivery as part of business as usual. Digital maturity of existing services will be developed over time, but all new services should be digitally mature from outset. All services will need to ensure staff are skilled and capable to support citizens and deliver modern, efficient, and joined up services with SMART measures.

Leadership group will be responsible for:

- Agreeing the strategy, prior to submitting for the Political approval and consultation.
- Agreeing the strategy action plan and ensuring a bounded portfolio for the term.
- Agreeing individual service digital plans.
- Ensuring all services have a Digital Champion in place.
- Monitor and challenge progress, ensuring corporate needs are being met.
- Agree and allocate adequate resources to ensure the strategy, and plans are delivered effectively.
- Agree and allocate funds from the earmarked digital reserve fund.

New Ways of Working project board will be responsible for:

- Prioritising projects held within biannual plans.
- Approving service delivery plans and submitting to Leadership group.
- Coordinate and progress/pause projects prioritising those with greatest impact/return and in accordance with the resources available.
- Ensuring that Service areas have the skills and the authority to deliver process and service improvements.
- Regularly review the Strategy delivery plan in line with the Council's requirements, changes in technology and value for money.
- Regularly review Service digital plans to ensure progress is in line with the Strategy and Council requirements.
- Monitor and drive progress, ensuring all required metrics are automatically collected and reported quarterly to Leadership Group and Corporate Performance Board.

- Coordination of bi-annual plans.

CLO for Customer Contact, ICT and Digital will be responsible for:

- Ensuring technical vision, strategy, consistency and oversight of digital products and projects.
- Collate and maintain Strategy Implementation plans agreed at New Ways of Working Board.
- Monitoring service maturity
- Ensuring the links to technical architecture and customer support wrap around for projects are appropriate.
- Working with services to capture and tailor plan requirements to align with strategic objectives.

CLO for Policy and Performance

- Ensuring progress reports and measures are reflected automatically in performance board and business plans.
- Ensure that leadership group can effectively monitor delivery progress.
- Support the scrutiny of progress through performance board.

# Contribution to key strategies

Priority	Outcome	Ceredigion Strategy				Welsh Government Digital Strategy				5 Ways of Working				
		Boosting the economy	Caring and healthy communities	Providing the best start in life	Sustainable, green communities	Digital Services	Digital Inclusion	Digital Skills	The Digital Economy	Data and Collaboration	Long term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration
Digital Organisation	Staff development & structure	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔	
	ICT Foundations		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		
	Data driven organisation	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔				
	Digital Leadership and Skills		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
	Cyber Security and resilience			✔	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔		
	Net Zero support		✔		✔	✔			✔	✔	✔			
	Digital service maturity		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
	Customer contact		✔			✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		
Digital Resident	My account		✔		✔	✔		✔					✔	✔
	Channel shift		✔		✔	✔		✔		✔		✔	✔	✔
	Newsletter and engagement		✔		✔	✔							✔	✔
	Involvement in design of services				✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Electronic payments	✔				✔	✔	✔	✔			✔		✔
Digital Community	Supporting the wider community	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔		✔	
	Support for businesses	✔			✔	✔		✔	✔				✔	✔
	Health and social care Record		✔	✔		✔	✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
	Socially Prescribed Model		✔		✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
	Technology enabled care		✔		✔	✔			✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
	Education			✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	
	Digital inclusion	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	



Cyngor Sir  
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## CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 12 March 2024

**Title:** Draft Forward Work Programme 2023/24

**Purpose of the report:** Review the current work programme of the Committee

**Reason Scrutiny have requested the information:**

The forward work programme of the Committee is reviewed and updated at each meeting

### **Background**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees oversee the work of the Council to make sure that it delivers services in the best way and for the benefit of the local community.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to look at the services and issues that affect people in Ceredigion. The process provides the opportunity for Councillors to examine the various functions of the council, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and to make recommendations to this effect.

Scrutiny plays an essential role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's decision making process and the way in which it delivers services.

The main roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Holding the cabinet and officers as decision-makers to account
- Being a 'critical friend', through questioning how decisions have been made to provide a 'check and balance' to decision makers, adding legitimacy to the decision making process
- Undertaking reviews of council services and policy
- Undertaking reviews to develop council services and policies
- Considering any other matter that affects the county
- Ensuring that Ceredigion is performing to the best of its ability and delivering high quality services to its citizens
- Assessing the impact of the Council's policies on local communities and recommending improvement
- Engaging with the public to develop citizen centred policies and services

Effective Overview and Scrutiny can lead to:

- Better decision making

- Improved Service Delivery and Performance
- Robust Policy Development arising from public consultation and input of independent expertise
- Enhanced Democracy, Inclusiveness, Community Leadership and Engagement
- Adds a clear dimension of transparency and accountability to the political workings of the Council
- Provides an opportunity for all Members to develop specialist skills and knowledge that can benefit future policy making and performance monitoring processes
- Creates a culture of evidence based self-challenge

### **Current Situation**

#### **Questions to consider when choosing topics**

- Is there a clear objective for examining this topic?
- Are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?
- What are the likely benefits to the Council and the citizens of Ceredigion?
- Is the issue significant?
- Are there links to the Corporate Strategy
- Is it a key issue to the public?
- Have the issues been raised by external audit?
- Is it a poor performing service?

### **Choosing topics**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should consider information from the Corporate Strategy, the Corporate Risk Register, budget savings – proposals and impact, Quarterly Corporate Performance Management panel meetings and departmental input in choosing topics and designing their Forward Work Programmes, as well as any continuing work.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.**

No

#### **Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

**Long term:** N/A  
**Collaboration:** N/A  
**Involvement:** N/A  
**Prevention:** N/A  
**Integration:** N/A

### **Recommendation(s):**

To review and update the current Forward Work Programme.

**Contact Name:** Dwynwen Jones

**Designation:** Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer

**Date of Report:** 1 March 2024

### **Acronyms:**

FWP – Forward Work Programme

Committee	Item (description/title)	Invited Speakers	Purpose i.e. monitoring, policy, recommendation
<b>Corporate Resources</b>			
12 June 2023	SMART Towns Digital Connectivity update  Engagement and Participation Plan Annual Report 2022-23	Arwyn Davies  David Owen  Cathryn Morgan	Chair's request  Chair's request
19 July 2023	Menopause Policy  Workforce Plan  Update on Hybrid Working  Update on Clic (requested)  Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Geraint Edwards  Geraint Edwards  Geraint Edwards/Russell Hughes-Pickering  Joy Lake/Anna Gawthorpe  Duncan Hall	Pre-Cabinet  Pre-Cabinet  Pre-Cabinet
19 October 2023	To Elect a vice-chairman for the remainder of the 2023/2024 municipal year with immediate effect  Tackling Hardship  Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Reports  Update on Banking Services Contract	  Cathryn Morgan  Marie Neige-Hadfield/Alun Williams  Duncan Hall	  Pre-Cabinet  For info  Chair requested following public request

7 December 2023	Engagement and Participation Strategy update monitoring report  Discuss the possibility of establishing a Procurement Task and Finish Group	Cathryn Morgan	Agreed at June's meeting to monitor progress 6 monthly
9 February 2024, 1:30pm	Budget Preparation		
12 March 2024, 2pm	Family Support and Leave Policy Leave and Absences Policy Flexible Working Policy Prevention and Management of Stress Policy Driving at Work Policy Council Fleet (amended)  Digital Strategy  Half yearly Compliments, complaints and FOI report broken down into service area	Geraint Edwards  Alan Morris  Marie-Niege Hadfield  Katy Sinnet-Jones	All Pre-Cabinet  Pre-Cabinet  Monitoring  Information
16 May 2024	Council Tax and Welfare Reform update  County Farms Strategy	Ann Ireland  Arwyn Davies	
Future meetings	9 <sup>th</sup> July – Delegated Decisions report  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the Corporate Estate</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>	Elin Prysor	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement and Commissioning Strategy</li> </ul>		
Task and Finish County Farms	Ongoing		

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## Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held at the Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Friday, 9 February 2024

**PRESENT:** Councillor Rhodri Evans (Chair), Councillors Elaine Evans, Euros Davies, Ifan Davies, Raymond Evans, Endaf Edwards, Eryl Evans, Paul Hinge, Hugh R M Hughes, Ceris Jones, Ann Bowen Morgan, Caryl Roberts and Carl Worrall

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation.

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services.

Councillor Catrin M S Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services.

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection.

Councillor Clive Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration.

Councillors Alun Williams, Keith Henson, Wyn Thomas. (Cabinet Members).

Councillors Gwyn James, Elizabeth Evans, Amanda Edwards, Chris James, Keith Evans, Wyn Evans.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Barry Rees, Corporate Director; James Starbuck, Corporate Director, Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer, Finance and Procurement, Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer Democratic Services, Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer and Monitoring Officer, Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer, Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer, Alan Morris, Corporate Lead Officer, Kirsty Dawson, Corporate Manager, Robert Davies and Veronica Evans, Assistant Accountants, Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer and Nia Jones, Corporate Manager Democratic Services.

(2:00pm – 4:50pm)

### 7 Apologies

None

### 8 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)

**Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

Councillor Endaf Edwards disclosed a personal interest with regards to discussions regarding Staff Salaries.

## 9 Report on the draft 24/25 Budget

Councillor Rhodri Evans, Committee Chair, outlined the meeting procedure and welcomed the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement Services, Committee Members, the remaining Cabinet Members, non-Committee Members and Officers to the meeting.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bryan Davies, presented the report on the draft budget for 2024/2025. The Leader stated that this was an extraordinarily difficult financial situation faced by the Council with considerable financial pressures. He stated that during his time as a Councillor he has never known such a challenging financial situation as Ceredigion only received a 2.6% increase in the draft 24/25 settlement from Welsh Government. He advised Committee Members that he has met with some Town and Community Councils to discuss the financial situation and has more meetings scheduled this coming week.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, Councillor Gareth Davies, presented the remaining information in the report. Councillor Davies also stated that this is by far the worst financial situation he has faced as Councillor in setting the budget.

It was advised that areas from Enclosure A of the agenda papers that this committee may wish to give consideration were as follows:

- a) Section 3 - The 24/25 WG Provisional Settlement outcome for Ceredigion.
- b) Section 4 – High level Budget Considerations including:
  - Section 4b) - Total level of Revenue Budget Cost Pressures.
  - Section 4d) - Total level of Revenue Budget Reduction proposals.
  - Section 4f) - Cabinet’s proposal on Council Tax Premiums
  - Section 4g) - Potential Council Tax position
- c) Section 5 – Draft Budget Requirement
- d) Section 6 – Budget Risks
- e) Section 7 – proposed Multi-Year Capital Programme
- f) Section 8 – Financial resilience (including Reserves & General Balances)
- g) Section 9 – Medium Term Financial outlook
- h) The 11 Recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 23/01/24.
- i) Any other Budget matter that the Committee deems appropriate.

Welsh Government (WG) have openly stated that their 24/25 Draft Budget is ‘the starkest and most painful since devolution’. Ceredigion has only received a 2.6% funding increase (14th out of 22 Local Authorities), this also equates to Ceredigion receiving the lowest increase per head of population across all of Wales. It is therefore also Ceredigion County Council’s starkest Budget yet which is worse than was previously forecasted and less than the 3.1% referenced by Welsh Government in the Autumn.



The headline from the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in England was a 6.5% overall uplift in funding with £1bn in additional grant funding for Social Care compared to 23/24. Being a devolved administration Welsh Government are free to use their funding as they see fit. Consequently, there are several different policy decisions that exist in Wales as compared to England.

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement outcome, combined with various individual Specific grants being cut, as well as highly significant Cost pressures on Services that show no signs of abating, means it is no longer possible to continue to protect Services. There are now incredibly difficult budget choices to be made as part of weighing up how and where to reduce the cost of the Council's Services, alongside considering the appropriate level of funding to be raised through Council Tax.

Key points highlighted from the report are:

- The latest estimated revenue Cost pressures being faced by the Council total an unprecedented £18.1m, equivalent to a Ceredigion specific inflation factor of 10.1%. This compares with general inflation running at 2 3.9% (November 2023 CPI figure). A budget shortfall of £14.6m therefore needs to be found from a combination of Budget Reductions and Council Tax increase considerations.
- Competing demands on the Capital Programme are exacerbated by a reduction in core Capital funding from WG. The current level of core capital funding (£5.8m) is still lower than that received over 15 years ago and represents real terms cut of £5.1m (or nearly 50%) over that period.
- The cost of continuing to fulfil Welsh Government's policy of ensuring the Real Living Wage (10.1% increase) is paid to registered Social Care staff will cost Ceredigion an additional £0.9m for 24/25. This is the extra cost over and above funding a National Living Wage related increase and forms part of a total estimated cost pressure of £2.7m to fund basic inflation on externally commissioned Social Care services (e.g., Domiciliary Care, Direct Payments, and Older Persons residential placements).
- Demands and pressures on Social Care related budgets continue to increase - totalling some £6.2m over and above Employee Pay awards and basic inflation provisions for externally commissioned services.
- The UK Government continues to increase the National Living Wage (9.7% increase) but also continues not to provide any associated funding. Therefore, Employee pay awards for 24/25, which are not determined by Ceredigion County Council, are expected to continue to remain elevated. At a projected cost pressure of c£4.8m, this is a highly significant budget variable. The approach to Pay is the opposite to what was experienced during the previous austerity period, when the George Osborne approach was to enforce several years of pay freezes / 1% pay caps as a form of controlling costs.

- For the 2nd year running, there is a considerable increase proposed by the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority for the Fire levy which forms part of Ceredigion County Council's Budget. The current proposal would result in an increase of 12% on the Council's current Fire levy cost of £4.9m and would be the equivalent of over 1% on Council Tax.
- There is a hidden budget impact from a reduction in WG specific grant funding. For example - a proposed cut of over 20% in Social Care Workforce funding (an indicative loss of £250k) is bewildering at a time when there is a significant recruitment and retention challenge in the Social Care sector.
- Despite the lower-than-expected Settlement, the Cabinet still propose to increase Delegated Schools Budgets by 3.1%, which was the scenario presented to Headteachers and Governors back in late September.
- The current draft 24/25 Budget Requirement is a lower increase (6.9%) than the 23/24 Budget Requirement increase (8.6%). However, the WG settlement increase is only 2.6% for 24/25 compared to 8.1% for 23/24.
- The current 23/24 Band D Council Tax level in Ceredigion (for all components) is £1,908 which is just above the average Band D Council Tax in Wales at £1,879. Average Council Tax levels in Wales are still lower than the equivalent English Unitary Authorities average (£2,139 for 23/24). The 3 County Council element of the current 23/24 Band D Council Tax is currently £1,553.60.
- The Council recently agreed to increase the Council Tax premiums chargeable on Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties, with effect from April 2024. This decision has the potential to assist with the Budget Challenge by lowering an otherwise higher Council Tax increase if Members are so minded.
- Cabinet is mindful that c85% of all chargeable dwellings in Ceredigion fall into Bands A to E. The current draft 24/25 Budget figures indicate a potential Council Tax increase (for the Ceredigion County Council component) of just over £4 per week (or £18 per month) for a Band D property.
- Further work is ongoing to see where/if further Budget reductions can be added to improve the position further.

The Budget Scrutiny process and the involvement of all Members is part of this process. It is very clear that a 2.6% WG core funding increase, combined with cuts in WG specific grant funding, does not provide anywhere near enough funding to be able to deal with significant parts of the Council's budget being subject to inflation at well above CPI levels and in several areas into double digit levels. This means that there is an almighty Budget Challenge that can no longer be solely focussed on doing things differently and innovatively. The Council needs to make significant Budget savings which needs to include reducing and, in some cases, withdrawing Services completely.

Unfortunately, this position is not likely to just be limited to next financial year, because the outlook for the public finances into the medium term now looks even bleaker, notwithstanding there is a UK General Election to be held by the end of January 2025. Moving forwards, Ceredigion County Council needs to fundamentally re-evaluate its purpose and relationship with its residents to include a back-to-basics approach focussed on providing core statutory services, predicated on appropriate levels of intervention. Unless there is a new era of Pay freezes and minimal Social Care cost pressures, then in the absence of re-evaluating its purpose and approach, Ceredigion County Council is highly likely to become financially unsustainable in the medium term.

Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer, Finance and Procurement, then provided a brief verbal update on the latest Budget situation as follows:

- As a result of a £600m announcement for English Councils on 24/01/24, it was understood Welsh Government would receive a Barnett consequential amount of funding of c£25m. This could be worth c£600k for Ceredigion - but is yet to be confirmed. In addition, work has just concluded on the procurement process for the Council's new residual Waste contract. This will be reported to Cabinet on 20/02/24 with a provisional outcome of a £300k financial benefit. The combination of both factors, once and if confirmed, is worth c2% in Council tax terms.
- Committee Members were advised that a letter has been sent to WG from the Leader of the Council which includes 12 lobbying points. This letter has now been shared with all Members of the Council.
- DH reaffirmed the scale of the medium-term financial challenge if public sector finances are limited to no more than a 1% annual increase or possibly worse from 25/26 onwards.

Members were then given an opportunity to ask questions which were answered in turn by the Leader, the Cabinet Member, or the relevant Officer. Main points arising as follows:

- In response to a question, it was confirmed that a robust balanced budget is achievable.
- A Member stated that many proposals will require consultation, considering the timescale for this budget, he asked how confident the Section 151 Officer was that these will be delivered? In response, it was stated that any budget savings may not be 100% deliverable, but that consideration is given to the likelihood of deliverability and the quantum involved. It was advised that the relevant Corporate Lead Officer responsible for the proposed savings will need to obtain a political

mandate as soon as possible if the saving proposals are agreed.

- In response to a question, Committee Members were advised that the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members express their concerns to both Ministers and Deputy Ministers in Welsh Government at every given opportunity.
- Moving forwards Ceredigion County Council needs to fundamentally reevaluate its purpose and relationship with its residents to include a back-to-basics approach focussed on providing core statutory services, predicated on appropriate levels of intervention.

Cabinet Members then in turn provided detailed information regarding the specific budget movements by service, budget cost pressures and saving proposals by service shown in Enclosure B, C and D.

D1 - Customer Contact ICT and Digital

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Catrin M S Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £283k**

**Current Budget: £6.5m**

D2 - Democratic Services

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Bryan Davies, Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £15k**

**Current Budget: £5.0m (including Members' Allowances)**

D3 - Economy and Regeneration

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Clive Davies, Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £164k (part of £419k of E&R total proposed reductions)**

**Current Budget: £4.0m**

D4 – Finance and Procurement

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Gareth Davies, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £0.666m**

**Current Budget: £19.0m**

D5 – People and Organisation

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Bryan Davies, Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £20k**

**Current Budget: £2.3m**

D6 – Policy, Performance and Public Protection (Policy & Performance element)

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Bryan Davies, Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £6k (out of £70k for P,P&PP)**

**Current Budget: £2.5 million**

D7 - Legal and Governance

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

**Target Cost Reduction / Savings 2024/25: £19k**

**Current Budget: £1.7m**

Members then considered Enclosure E, Fees and Charges relating to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, pages 43 to 49 of the agenda papers.

Members then considered Enclosure F, Cabinet's proposal on Council Tax Premiums and then Enclosure G, Multi Year Capital Programme. Main points arising from discussion as follows:

- Referring to agenda enclosure D1, Customer Contact ICT and Digital, titled, removing the library service to schools - the Cabinet Member and Officer confirmed that the Service will retain flexibility in supplying books to schools.
- Referring to agenda enclosure D1, titled, Mobile Library Service. The Committee were advised that the 4 library vans are not fully utilised. With improved staff rotas, adjustments to route planning, the removal of the schools' service and by collaborating with the ICT Team the service can maintain a similar level of service with a reduction of two vans.
- Referring to agenda enclosure D1, titled, co-location of library services with other Council services. It was confirmed that co-location of library services with other council services will reduce costs through removing duplication of roles, improving energy efficiencies, and making full use of existing space.
- Referring to agenda enclosure D2, Democratic Services, titled, reduce the level of external translation. It was confirmed by making better use of technology and improving processes, the budget for external translation will be reduced from £46.5k to £31.5k. A Member congratulated the Authority for retaining its high standard of translating all agenda papers and stated that this is a service that the authority can be proud of.
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Authority continue to maximise the range of public facing services in Canolfan Rheidol, Aberystwyth and Penmorfa Aberaeron and seek alternative uses for County Hall, Aberaeron.

- In relation to the Corporate Estate / Commercial Buildings and use of space. The Officer confirmed the Service is exploring maximisation of income opportunities including recovering all costs, following up rent reviews, retain v sell v repurpose considerations. A Member suggested the service explore opportunities of providing residential living above the Commercial properties owned by the Authority.
- It was agreed that the Asset Development Programme should be placed on this Committee's Forward Work Plan.
- It was confirmed that the repairs required for the Museum roof in Aberystwyth has not gone out to tender but that the repairs were required in order to safeguard the museum's collection.
- Members expressed their disappointment regarding the Community Grants Scheme saving proposal. There is a proposed reduction in the Scheme's scope to only provide revenue grants via the Welsh Church Fund and the Capital grant budget to be reduced from £200k to £100k.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement confirmed that the Treasury Management Savings are reported quarterly to Cabinet.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** that they had considered the following recommendations:

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**For the respective Services that are within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

**1. To consider:**

- a) the overall draft 24/25 Budget position.
- b) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Movements.
- c) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Cost Pressures.
- d) the relevant elements of the Revenue Budget Reductions Proposals.
- e) the relevant elements of the Fees & Charges proposals.
- f) Cabinet's proposal on Council Tax Premiums.
- g) the relevant elements of the Multi-year Capital Programme.

**2. To make recommendation(s) for Cabinet to consider on 20/02/24, as the Committee deems appropriate, in relation to the Budget.**

**The Committee agreed to make the following recommendation to Cabinet:**

- 1. *Ringfence the existing 25% on Second Homes and Long-term empty Premiums to the Community Housing Scheme, without introducing a cap.*

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:** To assist with the preparation of a balanced budget, to ensure appropriate scrutiny of the overall Budget being proposed and to make recommendation(s), as appropriate, for Cabinet to consider at their next meeting on 20/02/24.

The Chair and Committee Members thanked Officers for their hard work in preparing the agenda papers.

**10 To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.**

It was **AGREED** to confirm the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 Committee meeting as a true record, subject to noting Councillor Eryl Evans' apologies. Councillor Evans also stated that she had expressed apologies for the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 Committee meeting that had not been recorded. There were no matters arising from those minutes.

**Any other matter which the Chairman decided is for urgent attention of the Committee**

There were no other matters raised.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2024**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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