



Employee Wellbeing Policy

1. Introduction/Context

Employee Wellbeing isn't just about ensuring the happiness of your team—it reduces absences, sickness and helps you get the best out of your staff. This Policy gives you an essential framework for maintaining a fair and supportive approach to wellbeing for every member of your team.

2. Policy Statement

Keynsham Town Council is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all employees. It is recognised that work has an impact on the mental and physical health of employees, and Keynsham Town Council is committed to making that a positive commitment.

Effective employee wellbeing will be achieved by:

- encouraging employees to seek work-life balance
- considering requests for career breaks and sabbaticals
- providing medical assistance to employees
- encouraging employee fitness
- promoting dignity at work
- minimising the stressful impacts of work
- managing sickness absence effectively.

3. Work-life Balance

- All employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous service are legally entitled to request flexible working if they have not made a similar request in the past 12 months. Keynsham Town Council will address all requests sympathetically and will try to meet all requests when the needs of the business allow.
- Any requests to work from home will be given careful consideration and permission must be given by the Town Clerk. No long-term work from home requests will be authorised. A request will only be allowed if it will not have a

negative impact on the smooth operation of the organisation. Employees must note that some jobs can never be successfully carried out from home. No employee will be granted permission to work from home if they are off work on sick leave.

- The only Employee that has been granted permission to work from home is the Town Clerk, for one day per month, if required.
- Employees who work part time will be encouraged to attend team briefings. To achieve this, the timing of team briefings may vary to cover the different working patterns of employees.

4. Requests for Career Breaks and Sabbaticals

- A career break is a period of time away from the workplace. This will be for a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years. During the period of a career break the individual is not an employee of the Council but will be kept in touch with what is happening in the Council through regular updates to facilitate a smooth return to work in the future.
- A sabbatical can be for a maximum of six months. During the sabbatical the individual will remain an employee and continuity of service will continue to accrue. An employee is required to have at least five years' service before requesting a sabbatical.
- Requests for a career break or sabbatical must be made in writing to the Town Clerk, a minimum of two months in advance of the career break or sabbatical.
- The Town Council reserves the right to refuse a request for a career break or sabbatical. The reasons for a refusal will be confirmed in writing to the employee. You have the right to appeal and you must do so within two weeks of receiving the refusal letter.

5. Providing Medical Assistance to Employees and Promoting Healthy Options

To promote the health of all employees Keynsham Town Council will do the following: -

- Provide a FREE Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) through Health Assured.

What is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health and general wellbeing.

Health Assured EAP Service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. The Council strongly believe in providing an EAP service that offers not only reactive support when someone needs it but also proactive and preventative support to deliver the best possible outcomes.

Services Available

- **Life support:** Access to confidential counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured therapy sessions (Employees only) at your convenience. This service is not run by Keynsham Town Council and no information about who has used the service, or why it has been used, is given to Keynsham Town Council.
- **Legal information:** For issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, consumer, property or neighbour disputes (employees only).
- **Bereavement support:** Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters.
- **Medical information:** Qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health related issues offering practical information and advice.
- **Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** A range of CBT self-help modules, informative fact sheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.

Services are accessed by:

A 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year free helpline and via the My Healthy Advantage smartphone app. Through My Healthy Advantage, Employees will have access to a range of features, all aimed at improving their health and wellbeing. These include:

- Live chat and support
- Personalised news feed
- Weekly mood tracker
- Four-week plans

6. Encouraging Employee Fitness

Keynsham Town Council encourage Employees to take exercise and keep fit where possible.

7. Promoting Dignity at Work

Keynsham Town Council believes that all Employees should be able to work without fear of being harassed or distressed by their colleagues, customers or other contacts in the workplace.

- Any Employee who is distressed by events at work and believes that their dignity has been violated or they have suffered harassment should talk to their line manager. This will be addressed in confidence.
- If it is not appropriate to speak to the line manager, Employees should speak to the Town Clerk or Chair of Personnel Committee.
- The Council will act promptly to investigate any allegations of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.
- The Council will support Employees in getting over any distress that has been caused.
- Employees who harass colleagues, or engage in otherwise upsetting behaviour, could be subject to disciplinary action.

8. Minimising the Stressful Impacts of Work


- All jobs can have times when the work is particularly busy, or particularly demanding. Keynsham Town Council recognises this and will support Employees by allowing regular breaks for the Employee to rest from these demands.
- Employees are not expected to be answering emails from home in the evenings. If Employees find that they are regularly needing to work from home in the evenings, they must discuss this with their line manager to try to find a solution.
- Keynsham Town Council will always take steps to cover the absence of colleagues, without putting undue demands on other employees.
- if Employees are struggling to cope with the demands of their job, they should discuss this with the Town Clerk who will refer the matter to the Personnel Committee.


9. Managing Sickness Absence Effectively

- Employees who are absent due to sickness must adhere to the Company Sickness Absence Procedure.
- Employees should not return to work if medical advice is that they are not fit to work.

- Employees who have been absent from work for a lengthy period of time will usually be expected to return to work on a phased return programme. This will be agreed between the Employee and the Town Clerk.
- Whilst an Employee is on sickness absence leave, they should keep in touch with their line manager. The purpose of this will be to ensure that key communications are sent to the Employee, and to ensure that the Employee still feels part of the work team.

Date adopted: 25th July 2023

Signed  Town Clerk

Signed  Chair of Town Council

Review date: July 2025

