

**HR POLICIES UPDATE****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****For Approval****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Elected Members of the Authority's revisions to the following Policies and Procedures:
- Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure (Appendix 1)
  - Flexible Working Policy & Procedure (Appendix 2)
  - Sickness Absence Management Policy & Procedure (Appendix 3)
  - Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy & Procedure (Appendix 4)

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the updated Policies attached as Appendices 1 - 4.

**3. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY & PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 The main aim of the Authority's Whistleblowing Policy is to provide a mechanism that enables workers, at all levels, to raise issues of serious concern within the workplace. The Policy has been revised to update the changes to the Authority's Designated Officers and remove out of date contact information.
- 3.2 The proposed changes are shown as tracked changes in the attached Appendix 1.

**4. FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

- 4.1 The Authority's Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, attached as Appendix 2, has been revised to update out of date references following changes to employees' rights to ask for flexible working which came into force on 6 April 2024. This includes the removal of the employees' obligations to explain the potential impact of their request on the organisation and how they feel the Brigade may accommodate the request.
- 4.2 Additional information has been included to clarify the 8 statutory business grounds in which a request may be declined and highlighting the responsibility of consultation between employee and line manager prior to any decision being delivered.

- 4.3 Amendments have also been made to the authorisation process to reflect recent changes to the management structure and to streamline the requirements.
- 4.4 The requirement for the Brigade to attend an employee's home to assess workstations has been removed along with the requirement for employees to provide documentation such as mortgage and insurance details relating to the employees' home.
- 4.5 The proposed changes are shown as tracked changes in the attached Appendix 2.

## **5. SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE**

- 5.1 The Authority's Sickness Absence Management Policy, attached as Appendix 3, has been revised to update out of date references following changes to HR and Time & Attendance systems, processes associated with making referrals to the new Occupational Health provider, the implementation of a Sickness Absence Support Plan, and shift start and finish times for operational and control staff.
- 5.2 It is also proposed that the sickness pay reduction appeal process is amended to remove the Chief Fire Officer and replace with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, who will hear appeals for employees within their respective directorate.
- 5.3 The proposed changes are shown as tracked changes in the attached Appendix 3.
- 5.4 It should be noted that although these revisions are required now, the policy will undergo a full review and refresh once the Alls Well project has concluded, and recommendations have been agreed.

## **6. MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE**

- 6.1 The Authority's Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy, attached as Appendix 4, has been revised to reflect the legislation introduced from 6 April 2025 under the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023.
- 6.2 Section 9 has been added to the policy to highlight the main points of the entitlement.
- 6.3 The proposed changes are shown as tracked changes at Appendix 4.

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