

# **Olney Town Council**

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## **Employment Policy**

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Including:

Recruitment and Selection Policy  
Wellbeing at Work Policy  
Training for Councillors and Employees Policy  
Equalities Policy

Adopted: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Minute Reference OTC26/05/6k

## Recruitment and Selection Policy

### 1. Purpose

To ensure effectiveness, efficiency and fairness in the Council's approach to the recruitment and selection of staff in all job areas.

### 2. Scope

2.1 This Policy applies to all employees.

2.2 The Policy applies to all vacancies irrespective of the grade and the nature of the job.

### 3. Principles

The Council's Policy will ensure:

- **effectiveness** - reaching the widest pool of candidates and distinguishing accurately between those who are the suitable and those who are the unsuitable
- **efficiency** - using the most cost-effective advertising and recruitment sources and methods within an Equal Opportunities policy context
- **fairness** - maintaining the Council's good name with existing employees and potential recruits alike by dealing fairly, honestly and courteously with all applicants.

3.1 Recruitment and selection of all staff is on the basis of merit without regard to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion or disability, unless a genuine and legal occupational need applies.

3.2 The Policy and Procedure are intended to promote good practice and be an aid to avoid unlawful discrimination against any person, directly or indirectly in the field of employment.

3.3 The Council is committed to removing the barriers that create disadvantage and to optimising the potential of individuals to achieve the Council's aims.

3.4 The Council wholeheartedly accepts the statutory requirements laid down in the Equalities Act 2010 which makes it unlawful for an employer or an employee to discriminate or to treat an individual differently on the grounds of gender, colour, ethnic origin or disability. The Council also extends the same principle to people on the grounds of age or sexual orientation.

3.5 The appointment of people from a specific group "to make up the numbers" is positive discrimination and is unlawful. However, the Council recognises the need for Positive Action as permitted under the legislation to overcome the effects of past discrimination and disadvantage. This may include encouraging applications from members of disadvantaged groups, or providing training for people from disadvantaged groups, so they can be considered equally with others. At the point of selection, the decision is made on merit alone, assessing each candidate against specific criteria.

3.6 The Council requires its managers to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is carried out with fairness and objectivity and that discriminatory practices do not occur.

3.7 No staff shall be employed on a zero hours contract.

## Wellbeing at Work Policy

### **1. Introduction**

The Town Council recognises its legal duty to assess the risk of work-related stress and to take measures to control these risks. To this end a Wellbeing at work risk assessment has been conducted and should be reviewed annually.

The following advice from ACAS is to be used as a means of reducing the risk of stress at work and resolving stress at work should it occur. It forms part of the Town Council's health and safety training.

### **2. What is stress?**

Stress is people's natural reaction to excessive pressure and is experienced by everybody. When a person is faced with some kind of threat or alarm the body responds with physiological changes such as raised heart rate and blood pressure, accelerated breathing and an increased flow of blood to the muscles. These changes can help the body to respond to the threat and overcome it.

When the physiological changes produced by stress are excessive or continue their effects become detrimental. For example, many jobs are carried out in a complex set of circumstances and the causes of stress cannot be dealt with quickly, once and for all. Stress results from a perceived imbalance between the demands made on an individual, including self-imposed ones, and the personal and environmental resources available to meet those demands.

### **3. Causes of stress**

Stress can be caused by a wide variety of factors and the effects of possible sources of stress will vary with each individual. People react differently to work pressures and deadlines that may motivate one worker may be a source of severe stress to another. Workers will be subject to pressures both inside and outside the workplace and sometimes it may be a combination of these pressures that results in stress.

### **4. Identifying stress**

#### *Individual stress*

Personal stress factors may include family problems, bereavement, illness, money worries, moving home or a conflict between the demands of home and work. Many of the outward signs of stress in individuals may often be noticed by managers and colleagues. Managers should look in particular for changes in an individual's behaviour, such as worsening relationships with colleagues, indecisiveness, absenteeism, accident proneness, inability to delegate or a general deterioration in performance. Those suffering from stress may also increase their use of tobacco or alcohol or turn to drugs.

Individuals can also learn to recognise pressure and take action before it builds up to harmful levels. Stress may manifest itself in a wide range of physical and emotional symptoms including feelings of anxiety or hopelessness, high blood pressure, heart palpitations or chest pains.

#### *Organisational stress*

Organisational pressures may include:

- poor working relationships
- bullying or harassment in the workplace, whether directly experienced or witnessed
- restricted social contact
- lack of training
- poor communications and consultation
- poor or inconsistent management
- change of job
- too many bosses
- no control over pace or content of work
- organisational or technological change
- being a supervisor
- under or over promotion
- too much or too little responsibility
- unreasonable time pressures or deadlines
- poor working conditions
- excessive noise
- uncertainty about role
- mismatch between tasks and resources
- too much or too little work
- irregular or long hours
- lack of feedback or acknowledgement
- lack of job security.

It is important to identify which of these pressures may apply before trying to address the problem.

Signs of stress in an organisation may be indicated by a general deterioration in employment relations or morale. Employers will often be aware of increased absenteeism, lateness and labour turnover or a reduction in output or quality of service. There may, of course, be other reasons for these symptoms but the possibility that stress is a factor should be investigated.

## **5. Dealing with stress**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has developed Management Standards to help employers deal with stress. These standards help measure an employer's performance in managing the key causes of stress at work and identify areas for improvement.

The Standards take both the individual and organisational causes of stress at work and group them into six main categories:

- the demands made on employees
- the level of control employees have over their work
- the support employees receive from managers and colleagues
- the clarity of an employee's role within the organisation
- the nature of relationships at work; and
- the way that change is managed.

The Town Council will review stress issues through a regular assessment process.

## TRAINING STATEMENT OF INTENT FOR COUNCILLORS AND EMPLOYEES

### 1. **Objective**

The Town Council consists of 15 elected Councillors and employs over 6 members of staff. Our Mission Statement and Objectives state:

*Our aim is to improve the quality of life of all who live and work in Olney.*

*To achieve the mission, we will ...*

1. *Engage in open dialogue with residents to understand their needs, and in turn explain how we will address these needs within the resources and powers available to the Council.*
2. *Provide cost effective services of a high standard to help meet the needs and wishes of all residents.*
3. *Assist and encourage other bodies to provide such services.*
4. *Promote the best interests of the town.*

One way we can be successful in achieving our Mission is to be properly trained to do our jobs. The Town Council supports its Councillors and Employees through its Training Programmes.

### 2. **How do we identify training needs?** Through:

- Identifying further personal training needs of employees through the Staff Appraisal system. Employees should be familiar with their training needs and their performance threshold standards. A record of training is kept by the clerk.
- The Training Programme for Employees as below.
- Maintaining a matrix of Health and Safety Training for every job.
- Our Councillor Induction and Employee Induction programmes and employee handbook.
- Assessment of individual Councillors' training needs via a Councillors' skills audit.
- Regular review by the Policy and Finance Committee of New Government legislation and guidelines.

### 3. **How is training funded?**

Funding is from budgeted expenditure by Committee.

### 4. **Our involvement in the Training Statement of Intent**

Our continued learning and development help us to be an effective organisation. It is up to each one of us to think about what skills we need to do the job and make them known. In addition, there will be essential training needed for some employee job roles, as set out in employment contracts, key performance areas, and job skills analysis.

### 5. **What we can expect from the Training Programmes**

- To receive an Employee or Councillor induction to the post
- To have an identified and accessible Line Manager/Supervisor
- To receive regular supervision
- To be made aware of appropriate training and developmental opportunities
- To be encouraged to consider and identify our own developmental needs in the light of any specified skills for our posts and through supervision and discussions
- To discuss our Personal Development during the Annual Staff Appraisal with our Line Manager/ Supervisor.
- To have a record any such development/training undertaken.

- To have access to all learning materials and reference books held at the Town Council offices and other Departmental sites.
- To take responsibility ourselves to maintain and improve our knowledge and skills.

### Training Programme for Employees

#### Cleaning Post

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Induction training to highlight any further training needs in order that the employee may effectively use all cleaning products and equipment.	Upon joining the Town Council
Employee Handbook.	On induction and on any policy changes.
Health and Safety as per the H&S training matrix	Every three years
First Aid at Work (only designated employees)	Every three years
Staff Appraisals to highlight any further personal development training	Annually

#### Customer Contact roles

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Induction training	Upon joining the Town Council
Computerised software training, Microsoft Office, Publisher etc.	As required to undertake the job
Employee Handbook	On induction and on any policy changes.
Health and Safety as per training matrix	Every three years
First Aid at Work (only designated employees)	Every three years
Staff Appraisals to highlight any further personal development training	Annually

#### Grounds Staff

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Induction training to highlight any further training needs	Upon joining the Town Council
Employee Handbook.	On induction and on any policy changes.
Safe use of equipment	As required to undertake the job
Health and Safety as per training matrix	Every three years
First Aid at Work (only designated employees)	Every three years
Staff Appraisals to highlight any further personal development training	Annually

### Deputy Clerk

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Induction training to highlight any further training needs	Upon joining the Town Council
In house training on Quickbooks software	Upon joining the Town Council
Employee Handbook.	On induction and on any policy changes.
Computerised software training, Microsoft Office, Planning Programmes, Allotment plans.	As required to undertake the job
Health and Safety as per training matrix	Every three years
First Aid at Work (only designated employees)	Every three years
Staff Appraisals to highlight any further personal development training	Annually
Planning Training	Regular updates
Procurement Training	As required
Development of Project Specifications	As required

### Town Clerk

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Certificate in Local Council Administration or equivalent	Upon joining the Town Council
Certificate in General Competence	Upon joining the Town Council
Induction training and Employee Handbook	Upon joining the Town Council
Computerised software training, Microsoft Office, Quickbooks software.	As required to undertake the job
Employee Handbook	On induction and on any policy changes
Health and Safety Competent Person Training to ensure that the employee can write and review risk assessments	As soon as possible upon joining the Town Council
First Aid at Work	Every three years
Staff Appraisals to highlight any further personal development training	Annually

### Training Programme for Councillors

#### All Town Councillors

<b>Training Needs</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Induction training – by means of Councillor Handbook and meeting with the clerk.	Upon joining the Town Council
Training by BALC for new Councillors	As soon as possible upon joining the Town Council

Code of Conduct Training	As soon as possible upon joining the Town Council
Training on any new, relevant legislation or government guidelines – normally by way of a paper from the clerk or as discussed at Council Meetings.	As required
In house finance training	As soon as possible upon joining the Town Council
Individual Skills audit to determine additional training requirements.	Undertaken on a regular basis

### **Equalities Policy**

The Town Council's mission is to provide and develop services and initiatives which will maintain and, where possible, improve the quality of life of the residents of Olney. This mission is supported by the following vision statements:

- Keeping and enhancing the vibrancy of the Town Centre
- Encouraging more and better events
- Creating further off-street parking
- Developing the Town's Heritage offerings
- Expanding leisure and sporting facilities in the town.

In this context Equality is a key element in working towards the improvement of quality of life of the residents of Olney, and in particular in the provision of cost effective services which meet the needs of residents.

#### **Olney Town Council will**

1. Ensure that its policies and services promote equality.
2. Work with partners to advance equality in Olney.
3. Meet our statutory equality duties as defined in legislation, particularly the Equality Act 2010.

#### **Olney Town Council will achieve this by**

1. Understanding and consulting on the needs of local residents to ensure equality in the delivery of services.
2. Reviewing and assessing existing and new policies to clarify their impact in terms of equality.
3. Ensuring its employees, and Council members work within an environment which embraces the duties defined in the Equality Act 2010 for Town Councils. This includes offering training where necessary.

#### **Who is responsible for this policy?**

The Town Council as a whole, has collective responsibility for the delivery of the policy. The Policy and Finance Committee is accountable for the progress of the policy ensuring that all Committees consider equality when assessing existing policies and services or introducing new policies and services. The Town Clerk and Personnel Committee are responsible for ensuring that recruitment and personnel issues comply with the Equality Act and will take advice where required.