

Briefing Notes on Policy Changes

LGPS Employer Discretions Policy

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations require employers who participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to draw up and publish a discretions policy and to keep it under review. Discretions are powers that enable employers to choose how to apply the scheme in respect of certain provisions.

The last time RDC published a Discretions Policy, there were only a small number of elements that were included, mainly those under redundancy and flexible retirement. These remain within the revised draft Discretions Policy as they directly relate to the Redundancy and Flexible Retirement policies which have not yet been reviewed.

In all other cases, the Council must decide how/if it will apply a discretion under each item. Where a discretion is applied, this is usually with a financial implication to the Council.

The policy looks complicated but it is only the last column in the table that needs consideration, all other wording is taken directly from the legislation and is mandatory. The policy is in line with other councils. NYPF have also had sight of the policy and while they cannot advise on what we should do as an organisation, they can comment if there is anything that may cause concern ie contradictory of another discretion or potentially discriminatory and positive feedback has been received.

Once the policy is ratified, this is then sent to NYPF for use.

Family Leave Policy

This is an amalgamation of all family related policies previously published separately. The majority of the policy is legislative. We have also been mindful of inclusive language use throughout the policy. A comparison table is below:

Key changes

Old Policies	New Policy
Separate policies for all (maternity, paternity, adoption leave) with the exception of shared parental leave; a policy for this does not current exist within RDC despite this legislation being introduced in 2015.	One document covering all types of family leave
Very outdated: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maternity leave last updated in 2010 – 7 pages• adoption leave last updated in 2008 – 2 pages• no shared parental leave policy• paternity leave (2002, revised 2009) – 2 pages	Follows up to date guidance and legislation

Misses some key elements of what should be contained in both documents	In line with ACAS guidance, includes procedural guidance and information on pay entitlements, KIT days and other statutory information
No section covering purpose and scope in any of the old policies	Section added
Terminology (abbreviations) only explained in Maternity Policy	Guide to all abbreviations
Very different levels of information between the policies – for example adoption leave very closely mirrors maternity leave the former was 2 pages, the latter 7 pages	Consistent approach to information, with more detail provided where necessary. Like information grouped for ease of reference
Outdated language and overly complicated explanations	Improved language and document sectioned, with comprehensive table of contents for ease of reference
One page separate document on New and Expectant Mothers at Work (2 paragraphs)	Incorporated into policy with risk assessment template

Probation Policy

This is a new policy to ensure a consistent and supportive approach to probation periods for all eligible employees. Although we have always had a probation procedure, the policy provides a detailed clear process for managers and employees to follow. This policy is closely aligned with the Council's People and Culture Plan and supports our priorities, values and behaviours in delivering a robust and consistent approach to performance with clear expectations, so a supportive performance culture can develop and be embedded.