

Watton Town Council

The logo of Watton Town Council is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a vertical stripe, topped by a stag. The words "WATTON" and "COUNCIL" are written in an arc across the top and bottom of the circle, respectively, with "TOWN" written vertically on the left side.

Employee Handbook

April 2026

This is the Employee Handbook for Watton Town Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council". Please note that the electronic version of this handbook is the most up to date version and supersedes any print versions of the handbook.

Welcome to Watton Town Council

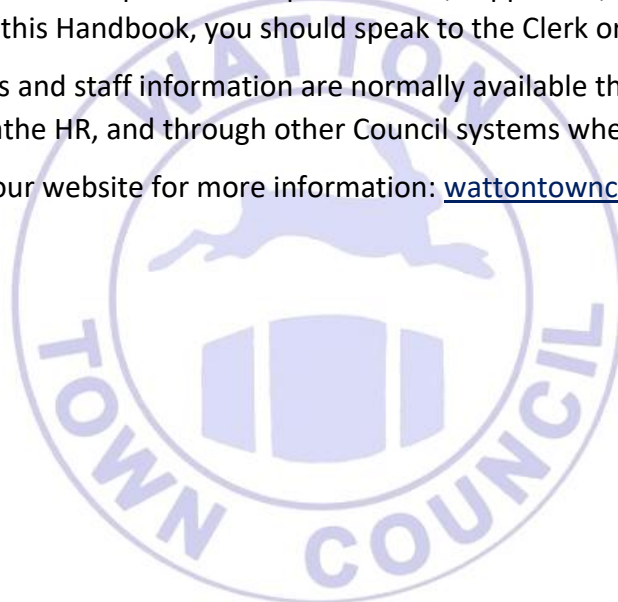


This Handbook is intended to help you understand how we work, what you can expect from the Council as your employer, and what the Council expects from you in return.

The Council wants to create a workplace that is professional, supportive, fair and practical. If you are unsure about anything in this Handbook, you should speak to the Clerk or appropriate line manager.

Current policies, procedures and staff information are normally available through approved HR systems, including Breathe HR, and through other Council systems where appropriate.

Please visit our website for more information: wattontowncouncil.gov.uk.



SECTION 2 — LOCAL PROCEDURES (NON-CONTRACTUAL)

- 2.1 Annual leave and Breathe HR
- 2.2 Carer's Leave
- 2.3 Code of conduct, behaviour and ICT
- 2.4 DBS and criminal records
- 2.5 Dress code, uniform and PPE
- 2.6 Driving, vehicles and mileage
- 2.7 Ending employment, Council property and redundancy
- 2.8 Expenses and allowances
- 2.9 Family-friendly leave overview
- 2.10 Flexible working and work-life balance
- 2.11 TOIL, working time and flexitime
- 2.12 Induction
- 2.13 Lone working
- 2.14 Other employment and conflicts of interest
- 2.15 Pay, pay date and payslips
- 2.16 Performance and appraisal
- 2.17 Personal details
- 2.18 Right to work and identity
- 2.19 Safeguarding
- 2.20 Security of premises and keys
- 2.21 Sickness absence
- 2.22 Social media and online conduct
- 2.23 Time off for appointments and dependants
- 2.24 Wellbeing, stress and support

SECTION 3 — POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (NON-CONTRACTUAL)

- 3.1 Policy groups and where to find them

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Glossary of Abbreviations

Appendix B - Statutory Employment Entitlements Schedule (from April 2026)

SECTION 2 — LOCAL PROCEDURES (NON-CONTRACTUAL)

This section explains how things work in practice. It is guidance, not part of your contract. If there is any inconsistency between this section and your contract, the contract takes precedence. Full detail is set out in the relevant standalone policies.

2.1 Annual Leave and Breathe HR

Annual leave is normally requested and recorded through Breathe HR. Bank holidays and designated Christmas shutdown days are normally entered in advance.

Leave requests should be submitted as early as reasonably practicable and require approval from the Clerk or appropriate line manager.

2.2 Carer's Leave

The Council provides for statutory Carer's Leave and explains the current arrangements in the Carer's Leave Policy.

Requests should be discussed with the Clerk or appropriate line manager as early as reasonably possible.

2.3 Code of Conduct, Behaviour and ICT

Employees are expected to follow the standards set out in the Staff–Councillor Protocol, IT Acceptable Use Policy, Social Media Policy, Data Protection Policy and related procedures.

Concerns about conduct may be addressed informally or through the Disciplinary Procedure where appropriate.

2.4 DBS and Criminal Records

Where a role requires a criminal records check or safer recruitment controls, the Council will manage this in line with the DBS, Criminal Records and Safer Recruitment Policy.

Employees must disclose relevant matters where required by that policy or by their role.

2.5 Dress Code, Uniform and PPE

Employees should dress appropriately for their role and for contact with members of the public. Operational staff must wear any issued Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or workwear where required.

Further detail is set out in the PPE Policy and any local uniform guidance.

2.6 Driving, Vehicles and Mileage

Anyone driving on Council business must hold the appropriate licence, insurance and other legal documentation required for the journey and the vehicle used.

Vehicle use, mileage and tracking arrangements are covered by the Expenses and Allowances Policy and Vehicle Tracking Policy.

2.7 Ending Employment, Council Property and Redundancy

When employment ends, all Council property, records, equipment, passes, keys and devices must be returned promptly.

If redundancy or restructuring is proposed, the Council will consult and follow a fair process.

2.8 Expenses and Allowances

Authorised expenses and mileage claims must be submitted in line with the Expenses and Allowances Policy and any local claim procedure.

Claims should be supported by receipts where required and submitted promptly.

2.9 Family-Friendly Leave Overview

The Council has separate policies for maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave, neonatal care leave, parental bereavement leave, parental leave and time off for dependants, and Carer's Leave.

The Statutory Employment Entitlements Schedule (see Appendix B) should be checked for current rates and annual statutory updates.

2.10 Flexible Working and Work-Life Balance

Requests for flexible working should be made in writing and will be considered in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy and current statutory rules.

Informal short-term flexibility may also be agreed where appropriate, but this does not usually create a permanent change to contractual terms.

2.11 TOIL, Working Time and Flexitime

The Council's normal local arrangement for authorised additional hours is TOIL rather than overtime pay.

Any flexitime or working time arrangements must be managed in line with the TOIL, Working Time and Flexitime Procedure.

2.12 Induction

All new employees should receive an induction appropriate to the role, including key policies, systems, health and safety information and practical introductions.

2.13 Lone Working

Employees who work alone must follow the Lone Working Policy, any agreed check-in arrangements and relevant risk assessments.

2.14 Other Employment and Conflicts of Interest

Employees must disclose outside work, business interests or conflicts of interest where these may affect their role or the Council's interests.

Any approval requirements will be explained by the Clerk or appropriate line manager.

2.15 Pay, Pay Date and Payslips

Salary is normally paid monthly by BACS. Employees should check payslips promptly and raise any concerns without delay.

2.16 Performance and Appraisal

The Council uses a proportionate appraisal and performance review process, supported by supervision and feedback as appropriate to the role and management structure.

2.17 Personal Details

Employees must tell the Council promptly if their address, contact details, emergency contact details, next of KIN or bank details change.

2.18 Right to Work and Identity

Employees must provide evidence of identity and right to work where required. Failure to maintain the right to work in the UK may affect employment.

2.19 Safeguarding

Employees and those working on the Council's behalf must follow the Safeguarding Policy and report concerns promptly through the correct channels.

2.20 Security of Premises and Keys

Employees who hold keys, codes, fobs or access rights must keep them secure and report any loss or security concern immediately.

2.21 Sickness Absence

Absence must be reported in line with the Sickness and Absence Policy and any local reporting instructions. Return-to-Work discussions and support arrangements will be used where appropriate.

2.22 Social Media and Online Conduct

Employees must keep personal and official communications separate, avoid disclosing confidential information and follow the Social Media Policy and Communications Policy.

2.23 Time Off for Appointments and Dependants

Medical and dental appointments should usually be arranged outside working hours where possible. Time off for dependants is intended for emergencies and must not be used as a substitute for planned care.

2.24 Wellbeing, Stress and Support

Employees are encouraged to speak up early if they are experiencing stress, workload difficulty or another wellbeing concern. The Council will consider practical support, adjustments or referral routes where appropriate.

SECTION 3 — HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (NON-CONTRACTUAL)

The Council maintains a wider suite of policies and procedures to support staff, managers and councillors. Current versions are normally available through approved HR systems, including Breathe HR, and through other Council systems where appropriate.

Employment, Staffing and Employee Relations

- Employment and Staffing Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Probation Policy
- Appraisal and Performance Review Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Capability Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Staff–Councillor Protocol
- Redundancy Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Standards, Equality and Wellbeing

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Sickness and Absence Policy
- Carer’s Leave Policy
- Parental Leave and Time Off for Dependants Policy

Family-Friendly policies

- Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Paternity Leave and Pay Policy
- Adoption Leave and Pay Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy
- Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy

Health, Safety and Safeguarding

- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- PPE Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- DBS, Criminal Records and Safer Recruitment Policy



- TOIL, Working Time and Flexitime Procedure

Information, Privacy and Communications

- Communications Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Social Media Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Vehicle Tracking (GPS) Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Employee Privacy Notice
- Data Breach Policy
- Data Retention Policy

Other Reference Documents

- Expenses and Allowances Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Statutory Employment Entitlements Schedule (see Appendix B)



Appendix A - Glossary of Abbreviations



ACAS	— Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
AML	— Additional Maternity Leave
BACS	— Bankers' Automated Clearing Services (bank transfer)
CCTV	— Closed-Circuit Television
CiLCA	— Certificate in Local Council Administration
DBS	— Disclosure and Barring Service
EDI	— Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EWC	— Expected Week of Childbirth
GPS	— Global Positioning System
HR	— Human Resources
ICO	— Information Commissioner's Office
IT	— Information Technology
KIT	— Keeping in Touch
LGPS	— Local Government Pension Scheme
MAT B1	— Maternity certificate confirming the expected week of childbirth
NALC	— National Association of Local Councils
NJC	— National Joint Council for Local Government Services
OML	— Ordinary Maternity Leave
OSP	— Occupational Sick Pay
PAYE	— Pay As You Earn
PIP	— Performance Improvement Plan
PPE	— Personal Protective Equipment
RFO	— Responsible Financial Officer
RIDDOR	— Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
SAP	— Statutory Adoption Pay
SCP	— Spinal Column Point
ShPP	— Statutory Shared Parental Pay
SMP	— Statutory Maternity Pay
SNCP	— Statutory Neonatal Care Pay
SPBP	— Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay
SPP	— Statutory Paternity Pay
SPL	— Shared Parental Leave
SSP	— Statutory Sick Pay
TOIL	— Time Off in Lieu
UK GDPR	— United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation
WTC	— Watton Town Council

Appendix B - Statutory Employment Entitlements Schedule (from April 2026)

This Schedule is a quick-reference summary of statutory employment entitlements and rates referred to in the Employee Handbook and the Council's employment policies. It is designed to be updated each year without having to amend every policy or handbook section. Where there is any difference between this Schedule and legislation, the law will apply. The Council's local contractual arrangements and enhanced provisions, where any apply, are set out separately in contracts, the Handbook and relevant Council policies.

Update and Interpretation Notes

This Schedule is intended to be updated each April, or earlier if legislation changes.

Figures shown here are statutory minimum only. The Council may offer local arrangements or enhancements in contracts or policies.

Where a policy or handbook section refers to current statutory rates, thresholds or other annually changing figures, this Schedule should be treated as the Council's central reference document.

Statutory Weekly Rates and Thresholds

Entitlement (Abbreviation)	2026/2027 position	Notes/Applies to
Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)	£123.25 a week or 80% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower	From 6 April 2026 SSP is payable from the first full day of sickness absence and the lower earnings threshold is removed.
SMP / SAP (first 6 weeks)	90% of average weekly earnings	Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)
SMP / SAP (remaining weeks)	£194.32 a week or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower	Applies after the first 6 weeks.
SPP ShPP SPBP SNCP	£194.32 a week or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower	Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP)
SPP pay eligibility threshold	Average weekly earnings of at least £125	The continuity of service requirement for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) continues to apply.

Appendix B (cont.) - Statutory Leave and Time-Off Entitlements

Entitlement	Statutory Minimum /Rule	Key Points
Annual leave	5.6 weeks' paid holiday each leave year	Bank holidays may be included within the statutory minimum. WTC's local annual leave model is set out separately.
Maternity leave	52 weeks' leave	39 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if eligible.
Adoption leave	52 weeks' leave	39 weeks of Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) if eligible.
Paternity leave	Up to 2 weeks' leave	From 6 April 2026 leave becomes a day-one right. Paternity pay still has separate eligibility rules.
Shared Parental Leave	Up to 50 weeks' leave and up to 37 weeks' pay	Available if the statutory eligibility and notice rules are met.
Neonatal Care Leave	Up to 12 weeks' leave	Available in addition to other family leave where the statutory conditions are met.
Parental Bereavement Leave	Up to 2 weeks' leave	Available where the statutory conditions are met. Statutory pay may also be available.
Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave	Up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave	New day-one right from 6 April 2026 where the mother or primary adopter dies within the first year of the child's life or adoption.
Unpaid parental leave	18 weeks per child up to age 18	From 6 April 2026 this becomes a day-one right. Usually limited to 4 weeks per child per year.
Carer's leave	Up to 1 week unpaid leave in any 12 months	Day-one right. May be taken as a block, individual days or half days.
Time off for dependants	A reasonable amount of unpaid time off for emergencies	For unforeseen emergencies involving a dependant. Not intended for planned care arrangements.
Flexible working	Right to request from day one	Employees may make up to 2 statutory requests in a 12-month period.