

BODY:	CABINET
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2002
SUBJECT:	PERSONNEL STANDARDS
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF PERSONNEL
Ward(s):	All wards
Purpose:	To seek Cabinet approval of revised and new Personnel policies and procedures for: Disciplinary, Grievance, Alternative Employment, (Internal) Appeals against Selection Decisions, HR Performance Management and Attendance Management.
Contact:	Caroline Freeman, Head of Personnel. Telephone 01323 415106 or internally on extension 5106
Recommendations:	That Cabinet adopt the revised Policies and Procedures in line with the requirements of employment law and HR best practice.

1.0	<u>Background/Introduction</u>
1.1	The Council's Personnel Standards were developed several years ago. Since that time, some minor changes have been incorporated. However, during the Best Value Review of Personnel two years ago, it was decided that a more comprehensive review was necessary. Recent and emerging legislation and the demands of modern Human Resources management have also dictated that there should be significant changes in our corporate Personnel Standards.

1.2	This represents the first batch in a series of revisions to the documents governing HR Management within Eastbourne Borough Council.
1.3	You will find the documents, in the order given above, contained in the Appendices. A brief summary of the new or revised policies/procedures is set out below. In updating these documents we have sought to take account of emerging equalities legislation and the equality standards for local government.
1.3.1	<p><u>Disciplinary procedure</u></p> <p>Minor amendments have been made to the existing procedure to enhance the investigative stage of the process and to require the Employee Relations Adviser to be informed formally of any potential action to be taken under the procedure. This allows for advice to be given at an early stage as issues emerge and for monitoring in accordance with the Race Relations legislation.</p>
1.3.2	<p><u>Grievance procedure</u></p> <p>This is a revised procedure which builds on our existing one by seeking a clear written statement about the nature of the employee's grievance at stage one of the procedure. As with the Disciplinary procedure, managers are required to consult the Employee Relations Adviser throughout.</p>
1.3.3	<p><u>Appeals against Selection Decisions</u></p> <p>A new two-stage procedure has been written which enables an employee who is dissatisfied with a selection decision to raise this with the selecting manager. The selecting manager will be required to review the process and the decision. The employee, if remaining aggrieved, can then appeal against the decision. A key feature is that issues are raised within a very short timespan thereby allowing for errors in the process to be corrected.</p>

1.3.4	<p><u>Alternative Employment</u></p> <p>This is a new procedure which will replace the current Employment Stability Procedure. It provides clarification of the process the organisation needs to go through when faced with a potential redundancy situation. Changes required by the Council's new Constitution have been incorporated. A new feature is a two year limit on protection of salary upon redeployment.</p>
1.3.5	<p><u>HR Performance Management</u></p> <p>This is an umbrella statement designed to provide an introduction to and set the context for our HR policies and practices. It will also provide an overall structure for the presentation of our reworked personnel standards.</p>
1.3.6	<p><u>Attendance Management</u></p> <p>Attendance Management has been identified as a key feature of our performance management. Sickness absence figures are one of the Best Value Performance Indicators and these provide national targets against which the organisation will be measured.</p> <p>The procedure builds upon our existing arrangements and provides tools for the managers to deal fairly and appropriately with sickness absence issues. It will stress the need for consistent monitoring, routine return to work interviews and formal reviews of absence. Set trigger points for action are now incorporated into the procedure and reference to Personnel and use of Occupational Health are more robustly recommended.</p>
2.0	<p><u>Implications</u></p>
2.1	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p>

	<p>There are no direct financial implications. However, improvements to the advice and procedures used by the Authority can have indirect benefits in reducing the risk of Tribunal cases, in better supporting those who have responsibility for people management and, consequently, promoting more effective problem management and better relationships in the workplace.</p> <p>Another indirect financial implication arising from the Attendance management procedure should be reduced costs associated with sickness absence.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>This is an opportunity to make our advice, procedures and policies more relevant, accessible and useful to managers and employees across the Council' service. We continue to seek a balance between empowerment of managers and setting a clear framework within which decisions are to be made.</p> <p>A comprehensive training programme is being drawn up to ensure that all our managers will be familiar with these new and revised policies and to ensure that they have the necessary skills to implement them.</p>
3.0	<p><u>Consultations</u></p>
3.1 3.2 3.3	<p>In February 2002 the Employee Relations Adviser and the Head of Personnel (Acting) embarked on this review process. Discussions and consultation has been ongoing with the UNISON Branch since then.</p> <p>The local Branch has experienced difficulties with resources during 2002. Despite these difficulties they have been enthusiastic and supportive of the principles underpinning the current review. UNISON gave their support to these new documents at the Joint Staff Committee meeting on 11 November.</p> <p>In addition, a cross-section of Council Managers have assisted in the redrafting process.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Conclusion</u></p>

4.1	The new policies and procedures reflect the Council's Corporate Plan and recognise within the Values our commitment to the support and development of staff to enable them to continuously improve our services. The Joint Staff Committee have examined the draft documents and they recommend them to Cabinet.
4.2	That Cabinet adopts these new and revised documents for inclusion in Personnel Standards in Eastbourne Borough Council.
CAROLINE FREEMAN HEAD OF PERSONNEL	ALISON ROBINS EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ADVISER
<u>The following documents were used in preparing this report</u>	
Current Personnel Standards, Volumes I, II and III ACAS good Practice guides Sundry Professional journals, websites, booklets National Employment Legislation	