



## Occupational Health and Wellbeing including post-offer employment health questionnaire

Owner	John Harrison, Town Clerk
Reviewer	Emily Hastings, Corporate Services Manager Kaylee Butcher, Democratic Services & Business Enterprise Officer
Approver	Initial: Staffing Committee Final: Finance & Governance Committee
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Related policies/procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probation/Induction policy to be written</li> <li>• Capability and performance procedure to be written</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity Policy to be updated</li> <li>• Health and Safety Policy to be updated</li> <li>• Display Screen Equipment Users Policy and workstation assessment</li> <li>• Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure to be updated</li> <li>• Dignity at work and Bullying &amp; Harassment Policy and Zero tolerance to be updated</li> <li>• Stress Management to be written</li> <li>• Mental health awareness to be written</li> <li>• Menopause policy to be written</li> </ul>
Policy covers	All HTC including Post Office and Hailsham Youth Service

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## 1. Introduction

The Council has a duty of care to safeguard the health and wellbeing of its staff. In addition, the Council is required by law to prevent physical and mental ill health that may occur as a result of its business activities. Staff are at the heart of Hailsham Town Council. Therefore, it is essential that the health of all our staff remains paramount, and that the Council strives to meet the requirements of occupational health legislation ([Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)). Staff also have a responsibility to adhere to health and safety and risk management in order to maintain appropriate levels of occupational health.

## 2. Occupational Health

The Council does not have an in-house occupational health department. Where possible occupational support/advice/adjustments/decisions will be made within the Council but for more specialised support the Council will employ an outside agency. Currently the Council uses the advice of Health Management.

Phone number: 01273 818 000 Email address: [info@healthmanltd.com](mailto:info@healthmanltd.com)

<https://healthmanagement.co.uk/contact-us/>

Quotes should be obtained for best value for money.

### 2.1 Occupational Health objectives:

The Council will consider occupational health support/advice/adjustments/decisions:

- when an employee is struggling with their physical or mental health
- to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities at work
- when an employee has been off sick for a long time or is returning to work after sickness absence
- to reduce the amount of time staff need to take off sick
- control risks to mental health, such as too much pressure at work or bullying and harassment

The council will:

- Provide sufficient resources to achieve good standards of health and wellbeing
- Encourage staff to escalate any personal occupational health issues immediately to their line manager
- Line managers to keep occupational health information sensitively and confidently, liaising as appropriate with the Town Clerk/other managers with expertise and/or outside agency advice.
- Staff are empowered to raise health concerns with management with the knowledge that these concerns will be effectively acted upon
- Have Wellbeing Champions (section 6.1)
- Staff are instructed and trained on the health issues that affect them, and have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to be competent in their workplace.
- Staff should report incidents, hazards and risks. Refer to Health and Safety Policy and reporting incidents (RIDDOR).

- Health-related accidents, incidents and near misses are reported and investigated. Any lessons learned from such events will be used to take corrective action to prevent further recurrences.
- All new and existing personnel and all those working on behalf of the company are made aware of the occupational health policy at initial probation.
- Where an occupational illness prevents an existing employee / worker from carrying out their normal duties HTC will investigate re-deployment opportunities.
- For more detail on Health and Safety see the Health and Safety Policy

### **3. Occupational health procedure**

The occupational health of staff will be considered:

- Post offer with a post-offer health questionnaire
- During probation
- Throughout the member of staff's contract
- During and after periods of sickness

#### **3.1 Post-offer employment health questionnaire (see Appendix 1)**

To ensure that HTC is meeting its obligations under health and safety and equality legislation, post-offer employment health questionnaires are required for all new staff.

Offer letters will make it clear to successful applicants that the offer of employment is conditional pending the completion of a post-offer health questionnaire. All work post offer health assessments will be carried out fairly, objectively and in accordance with equal opportunities legislation and good occupational health practice.

A review of the information within the questionnaire is required to:

- assess whether an individual's health is compatible with the role which they have been offered
- ensure an applicant's health will not be affected by the job role
- assess where a pre-existing medical condition could be aggravated by their required work activities
- to provide appropriate health advice and guidance.
- advise on reasonable adjustments required to accommodate relevant disability/disabilities.
- investigate Access to Work funding to help fund support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments.

All new staff starters will receive a health questionnaire as part of the recruitment process which they are required to complete and return to the relevant line manager.

- The information supplied on the health questionnaire will be assessed and will remain confidential. The questionnaire will be kept separate from the HR file because of its confidential nature, it will only be accessible by the line manager/Corporate Services Manager and the Town Clerk. The Line Manager

will liaise as appropriate with the Town Clerk/ Corporate Services Manager and/or outside occupational health agency for advice. If there are any financial implications the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) will be informed.

- HTC may need to make contact with the post-holder for further information prior to confirming fitness. Depending on the nature of the proposed work new staff may be asked to attend Occupational Health for further assessment or health surveillance.

### **3.2 Occupational health during probation**

Following on from completing the post-offer employment health questionnaire, and starting their post, staff should raise any occupational health issues during probation. Staff should complete a Display Screen Equipment Users Policy and workstation assessment and read the Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure. Staff should raise concerns if reasonable adjustments to accommodate relevant disability are not being made. Staff may be asked to attend Occupational Health for further assessment or health surveillance.

### **3.3 Occupational health during employment**

Staff should raise concerns to their line manager if their health changes or is impacting on their employment. If any existing or new disability is having an adverse or different impact on their working practices staff should raise their concerns to their line manager.

HTC will:

- assess whether an individual's health is compatible with their role.
- ensure an applicant's health will not be affected by the job role.
- assess where an ongoing medical condition could be aggravated by their required work activities.
- provide appropriate health advice and guidance.
- advise on reasonable adjustments required to accommodate relevant disability.
- investigate Access to Work funding to help fund support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments.
- If a member of staff cannot do their job because of their ill health/disability HTC will start the "Capability and performance procedure".

### **3.4 Occupational health during and after periods of sickness**

See Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure.

## **4 Access to Work**

Access to Work can help staff to stay in work if they have a physical or mental health condition or disability. [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-to-work-get-support-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition)

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support people with disabilities start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments. An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to enable employees to start or stay in work.

Through Access to Work, an employee can apply for:

- a grant to help pay for practical support
- support with managing mental health at work

## 5. Disability confident committed

HTC will work towards being Disability Confident Committed by the end of 2025, this will be part of the strategic plan. More details will follow within the Strategic Plan:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/disability-confident-how-to-sign-up-to-the-employer-scheme>

To be recognised as Disability Confident Committed, HTC agrees to the Disability Confident commitments.

The commitments are:

- inclusive and accessible recruitment
- communicating vacancies
- offering an interview to disabled people
- providing reasonable adjustments
- supporting existing employees

## 6. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Promoting and protecting staff wellbeing (physical and mental) in the workplace is important for every business.

The Council will aim to achieve most or all of the following by the end of 2026, this will be part of the strategic plan. More details will follow within the Strategic Plan.

HTC will promote physical wellbeing by:

- Promoting physical activity across HTC
- Supporting a healthy, balanced diet in the workplace
- Encouraging staff to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day
- Provide leaflets and information on the importance of physical activity
- Provide courses and talks on the ways that physical activity can help staff manage stress and back pain, as well as improving mental alertness and concentration
- Publicise walking trails or routes in the local area
- Provide information on local gyms, classes and sports facilities
- Encourage lunchtime activity groups, e.g. running clubs, football games

- Provide details on the UK's Cycle to Work Scheme
- To raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating for both physical and mental wellbeing
- Provide food storage and preparation areas for lunchtime meals
- Provide easy access to cold water in all offices and meeting rooms
- Encourage staff to eat lunch away from their desks

HTC will promote mental wellbeing by:

- Providing information and raising awareness of mental health issues
- Promoting policies and actions that support mental wellbeing in the workplace
- Tackle factors that may have a negative impact on mental health
- Equipping employees with the skills to support their own mental health
- Equipping line managers with the skills to identify and assist those with mental ill health
- Offering help, support and guidance to those with a mental health issue, and by making reasonable or practical adjustments to the role/environment
- Assisting those returning to work after a period of mental ill health by making any necessary adjustments to the role/environment
- Retaining and supporting staff who develop mental ill health
- Deliver non-judgemental support to any staff member experiencing a mental health issue
- Provide ways for staff to support their own mental wellbeing, for example through stress-buster activities, lunchtime activities and social events
- Have a flexible working request policy
- Set realistic targets and deadlines for staff to prevent long working hours
- Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or discrimination
- Ensure all staff have clear job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities, as well as the training to do their job well
- Ensure good communication between managers, staff and teams
- Check how working conditions and the organisation's policies are having an effect on mental health
- Encourage staff to talk to their line manager or a Wellbeing Champion, referral to occupational health if appropriate
- If a team member has been on long term sickness absence, ensure a gradual return to work with support at each stage
- Treat all matters relating to staff mental ill health in the strictest confidence, and only share information with prior consent from the individual concerned
- To encourage the employment of people who have experienced mental ill health
- Show a positive attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues, including having positive statements in recruitment literature
- Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act
- Do not assume that those with a mental health issue will be more susceptible to workplace stress, or will necessarily take more time off than other applicants
- Ensure that all line managers have received mental health first aid training, or have the skills to manage mental health in the workplace

- To raise awareness of the importance of physical activity for managing stress and maintaining mental wellbeing
- All employees will be made aware of the workplace mental health and wellbeing policy - and the resources that are available to them.
- The workplace mental health and wellbeing policy will be included in the employee handbook, as well as in induction packs. It will also be promoted each year and will be available to download from the shared drive.
- All staff will also be made aware of their own responsibilities in implementing the policy actions. Including, raising any issues or concerns, and seeking help from a line manager or Wellbeing Champion.
- Wellbeing Champions will be established to ensure the policy actions are implemented. Regular updates will be provided to all staff through line management.

The policy's effectiveness can be measured through:

- Feedback from staff
- A mental health and wellbeing at work risk assessment
- Staff sickness, presenteeism and staff turnover levels
- Exit interviews
- Use of occupational health or counselling services
- Staff complaints or referrals

## 6.1 Wellbeing Champion

The Council will aim to have Wellbeing Champions by the end of 2026, this will be part of the strategic plan. This will be a voluntary role. They will model the NHS England Health and Wellbeing champions [NHS England » Health and wellbeing champions](#). More details will follow within the Strategic Plan.

## 7. Eyesight test policy and procedure

Regular eye tests are important for all employees.

### 7.1 Regular DSE users and employees who have driving as an essential within their job description

DSE users and employees who have driving as an 'essential' within their job description will be encouraged to have a full sight test once every two years.

The Council will pay for the cost of a full sight test, limited to one a year, up to £25.

If a sight test shows that a corrective appliance is needed to accommodate a vision defect at the viewing distance for the display equipment concerned or for driving, the Council will pay a £40 contribution towards the cost, limited to one per year. If a prescription is needed that is not related to DSE work or driving related HTC do not have to pay for glasses.



### **7.3 Eyesight test procedure**

HTC employees are permitted time off to attend an eye test appointment. An appointment confirmation may be requested by the Line Manager or Town Clerk for confirmation of the appointment.

Employees wishing to claim for an eye test and/or contribution towards glasses (up to a maximum of £40) they must supply a valid receipt, which should be passed to the RFO for approval and payment into the employee's personal bank account via BACs.

## Appendix 1 Post-offer employment health questionnaire



**Hailsham**  
TOWN COUNCIL

# Post-offer health Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ensure, so far as is possible, that you are fit to carry out the duties of the post and without risk to your own or others' health and safety. Questions are asked about your past and present health, medical treatment and any impairments or disabilities, that may have implications for health and safety or may require reasonable adjustments to the job or other means of support. All post-offer health assessments will be carried out fairly, objectively and in accordance with equal opportunities legislation and good occupational health practice.

If you have any difficulties completing this form or wish to discuss any issues in a confidential setting, please contact the Corporate Services Manager for advice.

Hailsham Town Council (HTC) will retain this questionnaire, and it will be treated in accordance with data protection laws. Your questionnaire will be kept separate from your HR file because of its confidential nature, it will only be accessible by your line manager/Corporate Services Manager and the Town Clerk. Further assessment by an external Occupational Health Service may be needed and you may be required to attend for regular health surveillance or screening during employment. If there are any financial implications the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) will be informed.

Deliberately giving false or misleading information on this form could lead to the withdrawal of the offer of employment and/ or your subsequent termination of employment.

When you have completed the questionnaire please return it directly to your Line Manager.



	If 'YES' please provide details:		
<b>5</b>	<b>Do you think you may require reasonable adjustments or assistance to help you to carry out this role?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		
<b>6</b>	<b>Have you had any absences from work, of 3 weeks or longer, due to illness or injury in the last 12 months?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		
<b>7</b>	<b>Do you have any known medical/health condition, which would require you taking sickness absence in the next 12 months?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		
	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Are you having, or waiting for any treatment or investigations by your GP/Consultant?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		

<b>9</b>	<b>Any eyesight condition that cannot be corrected by wearing glasses or contact lenses?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		
<b>10</b>	<b>Any hearing condition that cannot be corrected by wearing hearing aids?</b>		
	If 'YES' please provide details:		

**Absence History**

How many days sickness absence have you had in the past 2 years?	Days
Was this only one episode of absence?	YES / NO
If No, how many different episodes were there within this time?	episodes

**Declaration**

I declare that the statements above are correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that their accuracy is a condition of any employment with Hailsham Town Council.

I grant consent for further occupational health assessments if needed.

<b>Applicant's Signature:</b> We accept electronic signatures, as well as signature pages which have been printed, signed and scanned	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Please email your form back to your Line Manager and/or the Corporate Services Manager**

**For use by Occupational Health**

Date questionnaire returned:	
Further Health Assessment Required:	YES / NO
Fit for Post:	YES / NO
Reasonable adjustments/support required:	YES / NO