

Title of Report:	ODHR Policies and Procedures – Special Leave Policy Eye Test Policy - Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	29 April 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	N/A

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	Improve Service Delivery
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	n/a
Capital/Revenue	n/a
Code	n/a
Staffing Costs	n/a

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Completed
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	N/A
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	N/A
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the following policies for consideration and approval:

- Special Leave Policy
- Eye Test Policy – Update

- 1.1 OD/HR have responsibility and delegated authority to create policies and procedures in line with legislative requirements and best practice. The policies to be considered for approval have been reviewed in line with these requirements, considering also benchmark information from other local Council entitlements and existing legacy arrangements.
- 1.2 The entitlements detailed in the final draft policies are deemed to be appropriate and reflective of all such considerations.
- 1.3 Extensive consultation has been conducted between Management and Trade Unions over a period of 6 months since November 2024. Trade Unions have in turn consulted with and provided feedback on behalf of their members which has been incorporated into the policies. The final draft policy documents have been accepted by UNITE, NIPSA and GMB.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Special Leave previously had varied policy entitlements based on legacy arrangements.
- 2.2 This policy is to harmonise the arrangements around various types of Special Leave together with the individual requirements for each type of leave, to ensure a fair and equitable approach across all Council staff.
- 2.3 In summary:
 - Bereavement Leave - entitlement for all Council staff under the Special Leave Policy has been aligned to the highest legacy entitlement to ensure there is no detriment to any legacy staff member
 - Dependant's Leave – Legacy arrangements had unpaid entitlement only for 3 legacy Council's and 5 days paid entitlement for 1 legacy Council (Limavady). Up to a maximum of 3 days paid leave per year has been agreed for all Council staff
 - Arrangements have been formalised for Unpaid Leave, as required
 - Arrangements have been formalised for Voluntary or Emergency Service Leave for those staff that may be associated with voluntary or emergency service organisations such as retained fire service.

- Jury Service, Attendance at Court as a Witness, Service with Non-Regular Forces and Time Off for Public Duties all remain as standard entitlements

3.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 3.1 The Special Leave Policy details entitlements to varied types of special leave at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and requirements for leave arrangements, to ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding special leave. This policy will give clear guidance in defining, managing and applying for Special Leave and provides a framework for consistent and fair application.
- 3.1.1 The Eye Test Policy has been updated as a result of the implementation of Westfield Health for all staff. As Westfield Health provides optical health cash benefits, the Eye Test policy now reflects this benefit and ensures that staff will utilise their Westfield benefits in the first instance, before reverting to the Eye Test Policy for reimbursement.
- 3.2 The Special Leave Policy applies to all directly employed employees within the Council regardless of whether they are fixed-term, temporary, permanent, full or part-time.
- 3.2.1 The Eye Test Policy applies to all DSE Users within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- 3.3 Entitlements under both policies will be provided in line with legislative requirements and National Joint Council for Local Government and any agreements negotiated locally by Council and its recognised trade unions.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 The draft policies have been considered and agreed at the Senior Management Team and the Trade Unions through the Action Group and Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JCNC).

5.0 Equality Screening

- 5.1 In accordance with Council's duty under Section 75 Equality Legislation, the policies have been screened and the result is that they were screened "out".

6.0 **Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council the Special Leave Policy and Eye Test Policy – Update for approval.

SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

Policy Number	
Version Number	
Author	

Date of Screening of Policy	
EQIA Recommended?	YES/NO
Date Adopted by Council	
Date Policy Revised	

INDEX

SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

	<u>Page No</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Statement	3
3. Policy Scope	4
4. Definitions	4
5. Accountability and Responsibilities	5
6. Implementation Arrangements or Procedures	6
7. Health & Wellbeing Leave	6
8. Bereavement Leave	7
9. Dependants Leave	8
10. Unpaid Leave	9
11. Jury Service	10
12. Attendance at Court as a Witness	10
13. Service with Non-Regular Forces	10
14. Time Off for Public Duties	11
15. Voluntary or Emergency Services Leave	12
16. Marriage Leave	12
17. Interviews	13
18. Study Leave and Examinations	13
19. Effect on Pension Contributions	13
20. Abuse of Leave	13
21. Evaluation and Review of the Policy	13
22. Section 75 Equality and Good Relations	14
23. Contact Details	14
Appendix 1 Special Leave Request Form	15
Appendix 2 Notification of Time Off for Dependants Form	17

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to supporting employees with special leave arrangements to allow employees to balance both work and personal commitments, and maintaining productivity, loyalty and motivation whilst at work.
- 1.2 In keeping with this, we recognise that from time to time, employee's lives outside of work may necessitate some form of support from Council. Strong consideration will therefore be given to allow employees access, where appropriate, to forms of special leave other than annual leave entitlement. Depending on the nature of the request, this may be paid or unpaid, as detailed.
- 1.3 This document sets out the policy and procedure for Special Leave within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and provides a description of the various types of special leave together with the individual requirements for those wishing to make a particular type of leave application.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 This Special Leave Policy has been prepared to ensure equity in the application of taking Special Leave and details entitlements to various types of special leave at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, and requirements for leave arrangements, to ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding special leave.
- 2.2 This policy will give clear guidance in defining, managing and applying for Special Leave. The policy provides a framework for consistent and fair application of special leave entitlements and arrangements. Employees should familiarise themselves with the policy and the necessary requirements before making an application.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3. POLICY SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all directly employed employees within the Council regardless of whether they are fixed-term, temporary, permanent, full or part-time.
- 3.2 Special leave entitlements will be provided in line with legislative requirements and any agreements between Council and its recognised trade unions.
- 3.3 Special leave arrangements will be considered in line with a number of factors including, but not limited to:
- The impact on service delivery and operational requirements
 - Availability of other staff
 - Leave requests which have already been requested
 - Individual employee circumstances

4. DEFINITIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Employee - an employee is any person under a current contract of employment with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, including temporary, fixed-term, permanent, full or part-time.

The Council - is the employing authority and is represented by Management.

Management/ Line Manager/Head of Service - are those employees charged with line management responsibility for Council employees and accountable for service provision, administration and implementation of Council's business.

OD/HR Representative - is an employee of the OD/HR Department who provides guidance and support in the implementation of this policy.

Employee/Trade Union Representative - is a fellow employee of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council or an official employed by a Council recognised Trade Union, or a Council recognised lay Trade Union official (who has been reasonably certified in writing by their union as having experience of, or as having received training in, acting as an employee companion).

5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Corporate Responsibility

The Chief Executive, on behalf of Council, has accountability for the relevant statutory provisions, and carries overall responsibility for ensuring the appropriate processes are in place which adequately and appropriately supports its employees regarding special leave.

Directors are responsible for being accountable to the Chief Executive for the implementation of the detailed aspects of the Council Policy and the equity and consistency of its application.

Directors are responsible for establishing their own arrangements to ensure:

- Effective implementation of the policy
- Managing leave entitlements within their department to ensure operational demands are met
- Consultation with their employees on these arrangements

Directors are also responsible for delegating authority to Heads of Service/Line Managers to act under this policy, as appropriate.

5.2 Management Responsibilities

Line Managers and Heads of Service are responsible for:

- Ensuring they comply with this policy and procedure, and apply it effectively, fairly and consistently within their area of responsibility.
- Ensuring all employees are made aware of this policy and their rights and their responsibilities, as outlined in the procedure.
- Referring to and complying with other relevant Council policies procedures and guidelines which impact on special leave.
- Ensuring their actions do not expose the Council to any unnecessary financial, legal or contractual risk.
- Ensuring effective management of special leave arrangements taking responsibility for:
 - Considering all special leave requests promptly and fairly
 - Ensuring accurate leave records through agreed systems
 - Ensuring operational and service needs are considered in line with leave requests.
 - Ensuring appropriate operational cover during periods of agreed leave
 - Obtaining, where appropriate, advice or guidance from OD/HR on the application of the Policy

5.3 Employee Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and procedure in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner
- Being flexible, open and constructive in discussing and agreeing special leave arrangements
- Working within the agreed guidance for special leave arrangements
- Ensuring effective management of special leave arrangements taking responsibility for:
 - Discussing leave arrangements with line managers
 - Providing appropriate notice of annual leave requests where possible
 - Submitting and recording leave requests through agreed systems

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPECIAL LEAVE

Special Leave is inclusive of the following types of leave and should be made where possible in advance using the Request for Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1).

Dependant's leave should be requested using the Notification of Time Off for Dependents Form (Appendix 2).

Employees will be required to update their Timeware account accordingly to reflect periods of approved Special Leave.

7. HEALTH & WELLBEING LEAVE

Reasonable time off will be permitted for medical appointments (Doctor, Dentist, Hospital etc.). Where reasonably possible arrangements for such visits should be made outside core flexitime hours, or where appropriate within flexible working arrangements.

Paid time off may be granted to attend such appointments provided the employee presents evidence of the appointment, if requested. Reasonable time should be agreed with your line manager if required to attend a medical/dental appointment or professional counselling. The employee should return to work as soon as the appointment has completed. Reasonable travelling time will be taken into account and should be agreed in advance by your line manager.

Time off for health and wellbeing appointments is for NHS/private medical appointments only. Time off for personal appointments or elective appointments must be taken in an employee's own time, including, for example, cosmetic surgery and laser eye appointments. Please discuss with your line manager if you are unsure if time off will be granted for your specific appointment.

8. BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Employees have the right to paid bereavement leave irrespective of their length of service, employment status and contracted hours.

In the event of a bereavement, Council will, on application, grant paid bereavement leave. Days granted must be taken at the time of the bereavement.

Employees will be required to complete and submit the Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1) to their line manager for approval. In the event of sudden circumstances, notice requirements for taking bereavement leave will be flexible, recognising that employees are likely to need this leave with little to no notice. Informal notification to the Line Manager is sufficient, either by phone; voicemail; text message or an email. Where appropriate, the form can be filled in retrospectively with your line manager as long as approval has been given.

Leave entitlements are outlined below.

8.1 Immediate Family

Council will, on application, grant up to 5 days paid leave in the event of the death of a spouse, civil partner, parent, child, brother or sister or any relative who is a member of the employee's immediate household.

Where any 'other relative' is not a member of the employee's immediate household and it is established that they are solely responsible for the funeral arrangements, the entitlement to bereavement leave will also apply.

A bereaved parent who has experienced the loss of a child under the age of 18 or has experienced a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy will be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave which is detailed in the Family Rights at Work Policy.

8.2 Family Member

Council will, on application, grant up to 3 day's paid leave in the event of a death of a grandparent, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law. This leave will normally be up to including the day of the funeral.

8.3 Other Relative/Friend

Where time off is requested to attend the funeral of a friend or other relative, leave must be taken as either annual leave, lieu time, flexi leave or unpaid time off. Requests will be granted subject to the prior approval of the employee's line manager.

8.4 Work Colleague

An employee may be granted paid time off to attend the funeral of a work colleague. In these circumstances special arrangements will be considered to allow attendance where possible, however attendance will be subject to operational requirements and must be agreed in advance with by the employee's line manager.

Line managers will be sympathetic to individual requests for annual leave to cover other matters which arise relating to a bereavement.

9. DEPENDANTS LEAVE

9.1 Eligibility

Employees have the right to time off for dependant leave regardless of the length of service, employment status and contracted hours. Dependant's Leave will be paid up to a maximum of 3 days per year. Additional leave in excess of 3 days will be unpaid. Please note that unpaid leave may affect other entitlements such as annual leave accrual and pension contributions.

The right to time off must involve "a dependant" of the employee. The definition of "a dependant" is:

- spouse/partner
- child
- parent
- anyone living in the employee's household as a member of their family.
- someone who depends on you for care, or who reasonably relies on the employee in an emergency situation.

9.2 Entitlement

The right to time off exists in sudden or unexpected circumstances, such as:

- If a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted.
- Issues around a dependant's care arrangements
- If a dependant dies
- Unexpected incidents involving a child which occurs unexpectedly, for example, at school.

Dependant leave does not cover routine or pre-planned medical/hospital appointments or children being off school during school holidays.

9.3 Allocation of Leave

Employees will be granted reasonable time off to deal with the emergency, and the amount of time off granted will vary accordingly to the individual circumstances of each situation.

It is expected that one or two days will be sufficient to deal with most sudden or unexpected emergencies.

9.4 How to Apply

You must advise your Line Manager as soon as is reasonably practicable by completing the Notification of Time Off for Dependant's Form (Appendix 2) of the reason for the time off (including dependant concerned), and the anticipated duration of the period of time off.

Requests for leave may be declined in full or in part where, in consultation with the employee, it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- the circumstance relating to time off does not involve a “dependant” of the employee.
- the circumstance does not constitute an entitlement to time off.
- the situation is neither sudden nor unexpected.
- the amount of time off to deal with the emergency is not reasonable.

10. UNPAID LEAVE

- 10.1 Council recognises that circumstances may arise when employees need to take short-term periods of time off work however have exhausted all other leave options, such as annual leave, flexi leave or TOIL. Unpaid leave allows for approval of reasonable periods of unpaid leave on an individual case basis.

Unpaid leave up to a maximum of 4 weeks, pro rata for part time employees, per year may be granted at the discretion of an employee's line manager, which can be taken in full days. Unpaid leave will only be authorised when other leave options have been exhausted, for example, all annual leave entitlement has been used.

- 10.2 Requests for unpaid leave should be made in advance using the Request for Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1), providing a minimum notice which is twice the amount of leave being requested. For example, if 4 weeks' leave is requested 8 weeks' notice will be needed. Requests for unpaid leave will need both line manager and Head of Service approval. Management will consider requests in line with operational requirements and resources.

- 10.3 Unpaid leave may be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Personal development, education or training
- Caring responsibilities
- Extended travel

- 10.4 Unpaid leave will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where other leave entitlements apply and have not been exhausted i.e. annual leave or time off for public duties
- For the purpose of other paid employment
- Where a temporary or permanent reduction in contractual hours is appropriate

These examples are not exhaustive and there may be other circumstances considered in authorising unpaid leave.

11. JURY SERVICE

- 11.1 Paid leave of absence will be granted to employees who are required to undertake jury service. The employee should provide their Line Manager with a copy of the Jury Summons, which should then be sent to ODHR and Payroll.
- 11.2 Where an allowance is payable for attendance, the employee will claim this, and it will be reimbursed to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. When an employee is finished jury service, they will be provided with a form for completion. Payroll will complete the relevant section in relation to recouping costs and authorised with a Council stamp.
- 11.3 Council will not provide payment for travel or subsistence expenses during periods of jury service, however these may be reclaimed from the court. When the employee receives the cheque or BACS payment from the jury service the amount will include travel mileage, which they can keep but they have to pay back the difference to Council. This is then receipted.

12. ATTENDANCE AT COURT AS A WITNESS

- 12.1 If an employee is required to attend Court or a Tribunal as a witness, at the request of the Council (on a subpoena, witness summons or otherwise as a legal obligation), they will be granted special leave with pay for this purpose upon evidence of being called to court. The employee must claim any expenses for the attendance which will be reimbursed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- 12.2 If attending at the request of Council, employees will be required to update their timeware account accordingly.
- 12.3 Where, at the request of other parties, an employee is required to attend Court or a Tribunal for other reasons which are not work-related or requested on behalf of Council, they must take annual leave or unpaid leave to cover the period of absence. As above, employees will be required to complete and submit the Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1) to their line manager for approval.

13. SERVICE WITH NON-REGULAR FORCES

- 13.1 Volunteer members of Non-regular Forces who attend Annual Camp shall be granted two weeks' paid leave (pro-rata) in addition to their normal annual leave entitlement.
- 13.2 Additional leave required for Annual Camp and for special training in excess of two weeks' must be covered by the employee's annual leave allowance, or

unpaid leave. If an employee is required by statute to undertake additional training, they are requested to try to arrange for such training to be undertaken in non-working time. If this is not possible paid leave will be granted.

14. TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC DUTIES

14.1 Council will grant reasonable time off up to a maximum of 3 hours per month to employees who perform or hold the following public positions:

- a magistrate, sometimes known as a justice of the peace
- a member of a local authority, police authority or district policing partnership, local education authority, educational governing body, health authority or primary care trust
- a member of any statutory tribunal or of the boards of prison visitors

14.2 Any request for time off, should be made in writing to the line manager using the Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1), who will consider granting paid leave up to a maximum of 3 hours per month. All requests should be forwarded to OD/HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

In considering whether the leave application is 'reasonable', the line manager will take the following factors into account:

- How much time off is generally required for the performance of the office in question.
- How much time off is required for the performance of the particular duty on the particular occasion.
- How much time off has already been granted to the employee for public duties.
- The employee's involvement in current departmental activities and the effect of their absence on the operational requirements of the department

14.3 In all cases, employees must notify their line manager on appointment to the public duty, by completing a 'Register of Interest' form contained in the Conflict of Interest Policy, if they hold membership of any of the organisations listed above, or if they take up membership of such organisations during their employment.

14.4 When undertaking public duties, the employee must provide their line manager with an outline of the expected involvement throughout the leave year and agree/plan the leave without disrupting the service. Any changes to the level of involvement expected by the public body, or to the employee's job will mean that the agreement must be reviewed.

14.5 Where paid leave has been granted and a fee is paid for carrying out a public duty the fee should be remitted to Council, to the equivalent value of Council's paid leave.

- 14.6 All approved time off, should be recorded by the employee as “Authorised Absence” with a note on the system indicating the public duty being performed e.g., “Local Education Authority.”

15. VOLUNTARY OR EMERGENCY SERVICE LEAVE

- 15.1 Council recognises that employees may be associated with various voluntary or emergency service organisations, such as retained fire service, lifeboat or coastguard. Staff who wish to join any such organisation must obtain the consent of their line manager and Head of Service.

Service with these organisations should not normally entail absence from official duties, however employees who are members of approved Voluntary Emergency Service organisations may be entitled to take paid leave to fulfil their obligations with these organisations. Special leave with pay may be granted to attend emergency calls during working hours. Time away from the workplace to attend emergency calls should be recorded by the employee on Timeware.

- 15.2 Requests for voluntary or emergency service leave should be made in advance using the Request for Special Leave Request Form (Appendix 1). Requests for leave should be submitted and authorised prior to applying for such roles.
- 15.3 All arrangements will be subject to prior agreement by the employee's Head of Service. It is the responsibility of the Head of Service to ensure that they are satisfied that there will be no critical impact on service delivery during the absence of an employee for an emergency call-out. Timeware records and arrangements in relation this leave should be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that ongoing arrangements continue to be feasible alongside service delivery.
- 15.4 In some circumstances, dependent on an individual's job role, supervisory or lone working status, authorisation to attend emergency calls during working hours may not be possible. In such circumstances, the Head of Service will review the request with the employee in further detail.
- 15.5 Council vehicles should not be used for the purpose of attending an emergency call out with a voluntary or emergency service organisation.
- 15.6 Where an employee is paid a fee by an external organisation for attending emergency calls during working hours this time will be authorised unpaid leave. This time should be recorded on Timeware as ‘Unpaid Leave’ (hours, half day or full day).

16. MARRIAGE LEAVE

- 16.1 On completion of one years' continuous service, employees may, upon application, be granted up to 3 days paid special leave (pro-rata for part time

employees) at the time of their marriage or civil partnership. Employment must continue following marriage or civil partnership.

- 16.2 Requests for marriage leave should be made in advance with as much notice as possible to the employee's line manager.

17. INTERVIEWS

- 17.1 Employees are entitled to attend interviews for opportunities internally to Council during their working day. Requests for interview leave should be made in advance with as much notice as possible to the employee's line manager. Reasonable paid time to attend the interview should be granted.
- 17.2 Council will maintain its commitment to support all employees under notice of redundancy. Employees will be given reasonable time off work during their notice period, subject to operational requirements, with pay to look for alternative employment or to make arrangements for training for future employment. The employee will be paid for such time, up to a maximum of two working days.
- 17.3 Time off for interviews external to Council should be taken using authorised annual leave, flexi leave, TOIL or unpaid leave.

18. LEAVE FOR STUDY & EXAMINATIONS

- 18.1 Where a course of study has been authorised through Council's Assistance to Study Policy, please refer to this policy for information in relation to time off for study and examinations.

19. EFFECT ON PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS

It should be noted that your occupational pension contributions will be affected by unpaid leave. Any queries in this regard should be addressed directly with NILGOSC who administer the occupational pension scheme for Local Government in Northern Ireland. Please contact 028 9076 8025.

20. ABUSE OF LEAVE PROVISION

Eligibility for Special Leave may be assessed if it is found not to be used for the intended purpose for which approval has been granted. In such circumstances, Special Leave may be terminated, and an employee may be subject to Disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedures.

21. EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

Council will keep this Policy under review as required and may make changes in line with legislation.

22. SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

23. CONTACT DETAILS

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Head of OD/HR
ODHR Department
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT49 1EY

Appendix 1

SPECIAL LEAVE REQUEST FORM
(SL-01 Form)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Health & Well Being (appointments) | (7) Services with Non-Regular Forces |
| (2) Bereavement | (8) Time Off for Public Duties |
| (3) Jury Service | (9) Study Leave & Examinations |
| (4) Unpaid Leave | (10) Volunteer or Emergency Services |
| (5) Attendance at Court | (11) Interviews |
| (6) Trade Union Duties & Activities | (12) Marriage Leave |

Note 5 only applicable if attending as a witness FOR Council – all other cases employee is required to take annual leave or unpaid leave.

NAME:	JOB TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:	DATE REQUEST MADE:

I wish to take special leave for the following purpose (please specify which type of special leave you are applying for by referring to the above list) and provide details as necessary. With reference to (2) above you must state the relationship between you and the deceased.

Dates required:

START DATE:	RETURN DATE:
-------------	--------------

Signature of employee: _____

The above leave has been granted as paid/unpaid leave **CONFIRM HOW MANY DAYS LEAVE GRANTED**
(Delete as appropriate)

Authorised: _____ **Date:** _____
Line Manager

Please forward completed form to Human Resources

TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES

Date Received: _____

Signed:

Action Taken:

Appendix 2



NOTIFICATION OF TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS FORM (SL-02 Form)

Name of employee:	
Employee No:	
Job title:	
Directorate/Department:	
Dependants leave commenced on:	
Date on which you return to work:	
Total number of working days or weeks:	
Please outline reasons for requesting Dependants Leave:	
Please state the relationship of the dependent involved to yourself? (Spouse/Partner, Child, Parent, Anyone living in the employee's household as a member of their family)	
<p>Employees have the right to time off for dependant leave, up to a maximum of 3 days per year regardless of the length of service, employment status and contracted hours.</p> <p>The amount of time off granted will vary accordingly to the circumstances of each situation. The right will be limited to the amount of time that is reasonable in the circumstances. It is expected that one or two days will be sufficient to deal with most sudden or unexpected emergencies.</p>	

I declare that the information I have given on this form is accurate. I understand that it is a serious disciplinary offence to provide false information on this form.

Signed:

Date:

Line Manager:

Date:

For OD/HR Office Use Only:

Received on:

Date:

Acknowledgement sent by Human Resources

Date:

Details entered on PAMS

Date:

Details passed to Payroll

Date:

Eye Test Policy and Procedure

Policy Number	CCG/3/20
Version Number	V 2.0
Author	ODHR / Corporate Health and Safety

Date of Screening of Policy	October 2021
EQIA Recommended?	NO
Date Adopted by Council	2 November 2021
Date Policy Revised	April 2025

INDEX

Eye Test Policy and Procedure

	<u>Page No</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Policy Statement	3
3. Definitions	5
4. Accountability and Responsibilities	5
5. Implementation Arrangements or Procedures	6
5.1 Workstation Assessment	6
5.2 Minimum Requirements for Workstations	6
5.3 Eye Examination and Testing	8
5.4 Rest Breaks	9
5.5 Home Working	9
5.6 Pregnant Workers	9
6. DSE Assessment Review	9
7. Evaluation and Review of the Policy	10
8. Section 75 Equality and Good Relations	10
9. Contact Details	10
10. Supporting Documentation	10
11. Appendices	
11.1 OP1 Form	11
11.2 OP2 Form	13

1. INTRODUCTION

Council (as delegated by the Elected members, through the Senior Leadership Team and Line Managers) is committed to the provision of safe and healthy workplaces. It is the policy of the Council that all staff have a safe and healthy place of work. This also includes work activities involving the use of a desktop computer (PC), laptop, smartphone or a tablet (portable devices), otherwise known as Display Screen Equipment (DSE), as a substantial part of their work.

The Council will fulfil its obligations under the DSE (NI) Regulations 1992 as amended by:

- Assessing all workstations used by staff using a self-assessment approach supported by online training and associated guidance
- Referring staff to occupational health when there is any doubt that there may be health issues due to DSE use
- Provision of suitable work equipment
- Provision of information, instruction, supervision and training for DSE users through line management and online training
- Provision of eye examination and testing for all users and the provision of an allowance towards corrective spectacles where they are required solely and specifically for DSE use
- Provision of prescription safety spectacles where staff are required to carry out fine work in an adverse environment which may require safety spectacles

The regulations apply to those who use DSE daily (for an hour or more at a time). The regulations do not apply to those who use DSE infrequently or only use it for a short time.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Scope

This policy applies to all DSE Users within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Employees who are not DSE Users may use the optical benefits provided through Westfield Health.

Equality

Consideration is given to the protected characteristics of all people groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The protected characteristics are gender, age, race, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, religious belief and political opinion, and persons with dependants.

The Council recognises the need for measures to ensure the health and safety of each of these groups. This policy and all other associated Health and Safety related policies take this into account.

(The policy statement should be signed and dated as follows by relevant Council representatives and Trade Union representatives)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 User means someone who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of their normal work, i.e.

- a) normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time; and
- b) use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
- c) Have to transfer information quickly to or from the DSE; and also need to apply high levels of attention and concentration; or are highly dependent on DSE or have little choice about using it; or need special training or skills to use the DSE.

3.2 Workstation means display screen equipment (whether provided with software determining the interface between the equipment and its operator or user, a keyboard or any other input device), any optional accessories to the display screen equipment, any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface or other item peripheral to the display screen equipment, and the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Line Managers shall ensure that workstation equipment is of a suitable standard, assessments are carried out in their area of responsibility, and that appropriate recommendations are carried out.

4.2 Users shall ensure that they carry out training and assessment as required as above, report any health issues associated with the use of DSE to their Line Manager and review the assessment regularly as above.

It has been established that the following conditions may arise following intensive DSE use.

- Work related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) and other muscle disorders including back pain and muscle fatigue caused by poor posture or alignment
- Temporary visual fatigue caused by poor lighting, screen glare or flicker, reflection, or poorly positioned DSE. There is no evidence at present supporting the assertion that DSE causes permanent damage to eyes
- Soreness to the eyes related to poor humidity

- Fatigue and general stress relating to environmental conditions and work planning

Other conditions sometimes associated with DSE use include epilepsy, facial dermatitis, electromagnetic radiation and effects on pregnant women. There is no medical evidence to suggest that any of these conditions are affected or caused by DSE work.

Concerns over health conditions should be reported to your Line Manager who may refer you to Occupational Health.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS (OR ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES)

5.1 Workstation Assessment

In the first instance workstation assessment will be carried out by the user following the use of an online training package and a short knowledge test. The software system will automatically generate an e-mail notification to the Line Manager informing them of any concerns raised during the assessment. It will be the responsibility of the Line Manager to address the concerns and take any necessary remedial action.

If the Line Manager has specific concerns which they cannot remedy, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Unit.

Managers with particular concerns over health effects suspected to be caused by DSE use should refer staff to occupational health if they cannot resolve the issue themselves.

The workstation assessment should be repeated if major changes are made to the furniture, layout, accessories, job role or tasks, or if the health of the staff member changes.

Otherwise, the assessment should be reviewed annually by the staff member to ensure that they are reminded of good practice regularly.

5.2 Minimum Requirements for Workstations

- **Display screen:** The characters on the screen shall be well-defined and clearly formed, of adequate size and with adequate spacing between the characters and lines. The image on the screen should be stable, with no flickering or other forms of instability. The brightness and the contrast

between the characters and the background shall be easily adjustable by the operator or user, and also be easily adjustable to ambient conditions. The screen must swivel and tilt easily and freely to suit the needs of the user and have no reflective glare. User's eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen.

- **Keyboard:** the keyboard shall be tiltable and separate from the screen (desktop), shall have adequate space in front to support the arms, have a matt surface, be easy to use with contrasting characters on keys.
- **Work desk/surface:** shall be sufficiently large and non-reflecting surface, allow space for flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and associated peripherals. Space must allow a comfortable position for operators.
- **Work chair:** must be stable, comfortable, allow the used easy movement. The chair must have an adjustable seat height. The back of the chair must adjust in both height and tilt, and footrests made available where required. The chair shall have castors.
- **Lighting:** shall ensure satisfactory lighting conditions and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment, taking into account the type of work and the vision requirements of the operator or user
- **Reflections and glare:** workstations shall be so designed that there shall be no direct glare or reflections on the screens. Windows shall be fitted with an adequate adjustable covering to attenuate daylight
- **Noise:** emitted by equipment shall not distract the user or disturb speech
- **Heat;** equipment shall not emit heat which may cause discomfort to the user
- **Humidity:** Adequate levels of humidity shall be maintained

The software systems must be suitable for the task, easy to use, and adaptable to the level of the User's knowledge. No quantitative or qualitative checking facility may be used without the User's knowledge.

Laptop Computers & Portable Devices must comply with the full regulations when they are used for continuous periods of more than one hour per day, on most days. Ideally the keyboard and screen should be separate, and there are several options to achieve this:

- Use with a docking station (preferred)
- Connect to a remote desktop computer
- Use with a separate monitor
- Use with a separate keyboard and mouse

All laptops and their accessories should be as light as possible. A carrier will be provided if a laptop is to be carried frequently. Avoid branded laptop cases for security.

5.3 Eye Examination and Testing

All DSE users will be entitled to an eye test, by a qualified optician, every two years. This interval may be reduced on the advice of the optician (evidence to be provided).

- DSE users shall arrange their own eye test with their chosen optician.
- The DSE user will ask the Optician to sign/stamp the required form and return to their immediate line manager for authorisation.
- A Council paid Health Plan is in place which employees should claim Optical costs from in the first instance. Employees should retain evidence of this claim, including the date of the claim and the total amount claimed.
- Once an employee has claimed from the Health Plan, if the cost of the eye test and corrective appliances exceeds the amount provided by the Council paid Health Plan, Council will cover any remaining cost up to the maximum value of £130, described below.
- The line manager will forward the required authorised form and evidence of Health Plan claim to payroll for reimbursement to the DSE user.

Council will meet the cost of:

- Eye test up to the value of £25
- Any basic 'special' corrective appliances (normally spectacles) where the Optometrist deems that these are needed solely for display screen work i.e. glasses specifically worn for display screen work when their normal/everyday glasses cannot be used for that purpose. A basic frame up to the value of £40 will be reimbursed, and DSE Lenses up to the value £65.

Where staff members require prescription safety glasses specifically for their work for Council, the line manager must carry out a risk assessment to determine if this is an appropriate health and safety requirement. If it is determined that the safety glasses are required, the Council cover the cost of the prescription safety glasses, up to the value of £75. The staff member will ask the optician to sign/stamp the OP1 form and return along with the receipt to their immediate line manager for authorisation. Once authorised the line

manager will forward the required information to payroll for reimbursement to the staff member.

Please see Appendices:

OP1 Form – To be used by DSE Users who require prescription safety glasses only.

OP2 Form – To be used by DSE Users who are a member of a Council paid Health Plan.

5.4 Rest Breaks

Breaking up long spells of DSE use helps to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb disorders and backache. Most employees will have some control over their own working arrangements and will be able to organise their work to take this into account. The best way to break up work is to alternate sedentary work with more active tasks, such as filing, photocopying etc. Where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary. Frequent mini breaks every 15-30 minutes are preferable to longer breaks, taken every couple of hours.

5.5 Home Working

Where Council staff are authorised to work from home following approval of an Agile Working application, the full requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and suitable set up must be implemented. A DSE self-assessment must be carried out in the home setting, and will be forwarded to the Line Manager for review and to address any concerns that have arisen.

5.6 Pregnant Workers

Although scientific studies have not discovered any link amongst new and expectant Mothers and DSE use, the layout and working arrangements should be routinely assessed over the pregnancy period. This should be carried out at the same time as the Council Pregnancy Risk Assessment process. Special consideration should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and an increase in the frequency and duration of rest breaks.

6. DSE ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The user will carry out training followed by an assessment on commencement of their employment and every 24 months thereafter, unless there are

significant changes. Training should be renewed every 3 years. It will be the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that these reviews are carried out in a timely manner.

If the user moves to another location, or there is a significant change in circumstances or workstation, the assessment should be carried out again without delay.

7. Evaluation And Review of the Policy

This policy will be kept under review, and if necessary, revised in consultation with recognised Trade Unions.

8. SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Peter Kerr

Health Safety and Insurance Manager

peter.kerr@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

10. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Health and Safety Policy

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - DSE Eye Test Form (OP1) (Requirement of Prescription Safety Glasses only following approved risk assessment)

Appendix 2 - DSE Eye Test Form (OP2) (Specifically for those who are a member of a Council paid Health Plan)

Appendix 1 – Eye Test Examination and Testing Form

Prescription Safety Glasses Only (following risk assessment)

Dear Sir/Madam

Acting on behalf of their employer, we require this employee (insert name below)

To undergo an eye and eyesight examination relating to their work requiring prescription safety glasses as a health and safety requirement.

[Optician]:

Please complete this form and give it to the patient, with your itemised account and note of the prescription if required.

The above patient requires prescription safety glasses as a health and safety requirement.

Signed

GOC Number
(General Optical Council)

Date

Signed
[Employee]

Date

[Employee – Eyesight Test Only]

1. Please forward the receipt to your Council paid Health Plan provider.

[Employee – Prescription Safety Glasses]

Please forward this form along with your receipt from the Optician, to your line manager who should submit to Payroll for reimbursement.

Signed
***[Line Manager]**

Date

*The Line Manager has sole responsibility for authorising and monitoring of Eye Test Examination and Testing Forms in line with the Policy (see Point 5.3). The Line Manager will sign and forward on to the Payroll department.

[Allocation as per CC&GBC Eye Test Policy]

Eye test – Up to £25

Prescription safety glasses (where the risk assessment has shown a need)

Up to £75

**Appendix 2 – Eye Test Examination and Testing Form
Specifically for those who are a member of a Council paid Health Plan**

Dear Sir/Madam

Acting on behalf of their employer, we require this employee (insert name below)

To undergo an eye and eyesight examination relating to their work as a **Display Screen Equipment User**.

[Optician]

Please complete this form and give it to the patient, with your itemised account and note of the prescription if required.

The above patient requires spectacles specifically for DSE use.

Correction **specifically** for DSE use?

(appliances prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned)

Signed

GOC Number
(General Optical Council)

Date

Employee:

[Employee – Eyesight Test Only]

2. Please forward the receipt to your Council paid Health Plan provider.

[Employee – Eyesight Test plus Frames and/or Lenses]

1. Please forward this form along with your receipt from the Optician, to your line manager.

2. Your line manager will forward this form along with your receipt from the Optician, to Payroll for reimbursement of expenses not covered by the Council paid Health Plan provider.
3. Please complete the process with the Council paid Health Plan provider for reimbursement under the Plan.

Signed Date
[Employee]

Signed Date
***[Line Manager]**

*The Line Manager has sole responsibility for authorising and monitoring of Eye Test Examination and Testing Forms in line with the Policy (see Point 5.3). The Line Manager will sign and forward on to the Payroll department.

[Allocation as per Council paid Health Plan]

The Health Plan allocation for Optical will be deducted from the total amount allocated as per CC&GBC Eye Test Policy:

Eye test – Up to £25
Basic frame – Up to £40
Basic lenses – Up to £65