

Covid-19 Response – Memorandum of Understanding between North Yorkshire County Council and UNISON

These are unprecedented times. Local government and its employees are at the forefront of the response to the Covid-19 emergency. Both the Council and UNISON recognise that this emergency will require changes to the way people work, and some of these changes will not be able to go through the usual level of consultation and/or negotiation with UNISON, the recognised trade union for NJC employees at North Yorkshire County Council.

However, both are mindful of the need to protect the good industrial relations that exist at the Council, and as such we have agreed some guiding principles to help inform decision making in the coming weeks and months. These principles will apply across the Council.

Arrangements for consultation

Meetings will take place at least weekly between UNISON and the Pay & Reward team for the duration of the emergency.

Any changes to existing agreements, policies and allowances will be recorded and will be temporary. Normal arrangements will resume as soon as possible, and changes will be reviewed monthly with UNISON.

Directorates will follow corporate policies and agreements, and will continue to hold regular DJCC meetings with the appropriate representative(s) from UNISON.

Homeworking and non-essential roles

Staff should follow the current government advice about working from home and about non-essential travel.

Where people cannot work from home, time spent in a workplace will be kept to the minimum necessary to perform essential or statutory duties. Where there are no essential or statutory duties to perform staff will be considered for deployment to support the Covid-19 response in other roles, or advised to go home.

Government advice about social distancing will be observed in all workplaces. Where personal contact is essential (such as a care setting), the appropriate government advice will be followed.

All meetings should be held remotely using technology wherever possible. There may be exceptional cases where a face-to-face meeting has to happen, in such cases current government advice on social distancing must be followed.

Deployment and changes to roles

Local collective agreements, joint advice issued by the NJC and requirements of the Green Book will be applied.

Staff who are no longer required in their normal roles, or their normal workplaces, can be deployed to support essential or statutory services across the council. Deployment to other roles, or changes to existing roles, will be proportionate, reasonable, and will take into account individual circumstances such as experience, qualifications, training, suitability, and location.

Any changes to roles (such as working patterns, shifts, pay, workplaces, duties, responsibilities) will be temporary, will only be for as long as necessary to respond to the Covid-19 emergency, and will not become contractual changes. Normal working will resume as soon as possible and all changes will be reviewed jointly with UNISON monthly.

Where staff are deployed to other roles, or where changes are made to their role, they will be entitled to any relevant allowances such as weekend and public holiday enhancements and excess travel expenses.

In accordance with NJC joint advice, staff will suffer no detriment in pay when being deployed to support the Covid-19 response. Staff will be paid at the higher of either their normal grade or the grade for the role they have been deployed to.

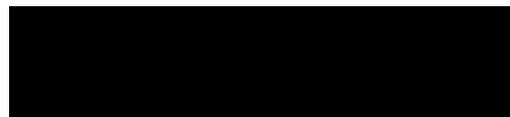
Health & Safety

The Council remains committed to providing a safe environment for all its staff. It remains committed to its statutory obligations in respect of Health & Safety. The Council will follow relevant guidance and advice issued by the Government and the HSE in respect of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Where staff are concerned that they do not have access to the appropriate PPE they should raise it immediately with their line manager. In addition, there will be a named person in each directorate responsible for overseeing the supply and use of PPE.

Signed



Justine Brooksbank
Assistant Chief Executive
North Yorkshire County Council
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Wendy Nichols
Branch Secretary
UNISON North Yorkshire branch