

# People Matters



People Service Newsletter  
December 2022

Welcome to the Winter edition of People Matters Newsletter.

This issue includes lots of information such as our Pregnancy Loss pledge, Recruitment Deadline reminders for the Festive period and the next stage of our roll-out of Wellbeing at Work e-forms.

I hope you have a good festive period and get the opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, which contains some important updates and if you would like to get in touch then please drop us an email.



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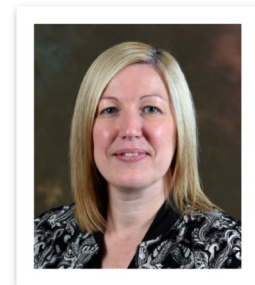
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**Fiona Walker**

**Head of Service (People and ICT)**



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

*Delivering our services with*

**Focus. Passion. Inspiration.**



## Recruitment Deadline Reminder for Festive Period

Due to the festive period, approved advert requests must be submitted no later than 16<sup>th</sup> December\*\*. (Please note the last Vacancy Scrutiny Panel Meeting prior to this deadline will take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> December, therefore if you wish your advert to be considered your advert request form must be submitted by 12pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> December).

Please ensure requests are completed accurately, justification for the advert is informative, budget is available and post numbers are included. Failure to provide accurate information may result in adverts not being processed.

- Adverts published after 9th December 2022 will close at midnight on 5th January 2023 or later if requested by the service.
- Adverts submitted after 16th December will be published by 7th January 2023 or within our SLA, whichever is greater.

Please note the Talentlink system will continue to be available for progressing your recruitment through the festive period.

\*\*HSCP – Due to your internal scrutiny process, further communication re. deadlines will be issued by your service to ensure your advert is presented to the committee.

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## Annual Leave on Kelio



A reminder that the 9th December is the last day for any holidays to be approved on Kelio for 2022. Please note if they have been requested but not approved by the close of business on the 9th of December your allowance will be cleared to show zero.

You will not see your new balances for 2023 Annual Leave until the 1<sup>st</sup> January, which will include any carried over leave from 2022. You are however able to apply for leave for 2023 in advance.

# Adverse Weather



As we approach the winter months please take time to read our [Adverse Weather Policy](#) to ensure you are familiar with what's included:

- Where Police Scotland are advising the public not to travel, employees will discuss alternative options to travelling with their line manager, such as: working from home or another Local Council location. If the above isn't possible, supports will be explored with the Community Planning Partners.
- Where none of the above options are viable, the Council will provide time off with pay due to the exceptional circumstances of the **red weather warning**.

For employees who are 'In Building' or 'Mobile' workstyles, we hope this provides peace of mind should we have a Red Weather warning. The health and well-being of all of our employees is of utmost importance, and the Adverse Weather Policy aims to support employees to attend the workplace, whilst ensuring their health and safety and maintain critical services.

Further information on the above, can be found on our Adverse Weather page on Connects.



## Gambling Charter

The Council is committed to supporting the overall health, safety and wellbeing of employees. In recognition of the impact problem gambling can have on employees and the difficulties this can create, not only within their personal lives, but within the workplace, we have worked with Trade Union representatives towards achieving the Gambling Workplace Charter. This work has culminated in the creation and launch of our new HR GUIDE—Gambling Related Harms in the Workplace, see Connects for more details.

The guide aims to encourage employees to manage their health and seek supports if they are experiencing gambling related harms or indirectly affected by problem gambling. In addition, the guide provides a consistent framework to ensure Managers are able to access information on how to support employees who disclose they are experiencing problem gambling or gambling related harms.

Awareness Sessions were held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022, with an upcoming Connected Leadership Session scheduled for January 2023. Look out for further details.



## Wellbeing at Work E-Form

HR have been continuously reviewing processes to transfer current paper-based forms to Office 365 forms in support of the digital agenda.

The Informal Stage E-Form has been in place since August 2022 for all employees (excluding Education). The main benefit of the form is that on completion both the manager and employee automatically receive a copy of the completed pro-forma by email. The appropriate administrator is also notified to record on the HR Payroll System.

The new form has been working well, and we are pleased to announce that the E-Form will be available for Education employees from January 2022. Please note there are two forms (one for Local Government Employees and one for Teachers). The links to the two e-forms are available on Connects and should be completed following Informal Stage Meetings.

[Maximising Attendance – Initial Long-Term Absence Review Meeting \(Teachers\)](#)

[Wellbeing@Work – Informal Absence Review Meeting \(Local Government Employees\)](#)

If you have any questions about the E-Forms, please contact

[HROperations@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:HROperations@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

## Code of Conduct - Gifts and Hospitality



To comply with the Employees Code of Conduct, all employees must ensure they declare any gifts and hospitality given or received in connection with their official duties. Permission should be sought from the Head of Service to accept any gift of value, and a record of this recorded in the gifts and hospitality register which is held by the PA to the Executive Director of each Directorate.

Employees should not accept any gift or hospitality of value from any person or organisation that is doing or seeking to do business with the Council.

A gift of value, however, would not include such items as calendars, diaries, other small articles for office use, or an inexpensive gift from a pupil, parent or client. If you are unsure whether the gift is a 'gift of value' please contact [HROperationsTeam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:HROperationsTeam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk) for further advice.

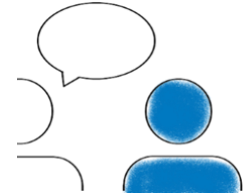
Any employee offered a gift of value/hospitality or giving a gift/hospitality even at this festive time has to inform their Head of Service; or, in the case of a Chief Officer, the Chief Executive; or, in the case of the Chief Executive, the Section 95 Officer or Monitoring Officer. The employee can only accept or give the gift if permitted to do so.



## Surviving the Office Christmas Party !

As you head out to your Christmas night out, remember we're all governed by our Code of Conduct and Dignity and Respect at Work procedures, both available to view on Connects - why not take a quick look to remind yourself of the guidelines and standards on the kinds of behaviour which are acceptable and not acceptable.

# Our Time to Talk reminder



Our Time to Talk Process, on Connects, exists to ensure that managers and employees take some time out, at least once per year, to check-in, reflect and most importantly 'TALK' about how the employee is getting on at work.

Our Time to Talk should focus on the contribution each employee is making to the Team / Service (i.e. work outputs combined with our Staff Values and behaviours), the development supporting this as well as checking in on employee wellbeing. The discussion may also include career aspirations and support for these, where appropriate.

Managers, this is simply a reminder that if you haven't arranged a time for the 2022/2023 Our Time to Talk for each team member, then you should ensure you do so before the **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**.

To help with this discussion, there are some further improvements that you need to be aware of:

## **FAO: Managers who wish to nominate their employees for courses.**

There are now two options for getting on some of our tutor led courses, both available on our Learning and Development Sharepoint Page:

You can book straight onto courses visible on our booking site( link on Connects page).

2. If the courses available are full/unavailable you can simply be added to the waitlist by submitting a nomination, using our new L&OD Course Nominsation eform again available on our L&D Sharepoint page.

\* Employees on our waitlist will be advised as soon as further dates are published.

Should you currently have access to CHRIS and prefer to input this information direct, then please continue to do so. Please also use your existing processes to input and update on the job and external training.

## **FAO: Employees and Managers - Development information available on HR21**

Also, did you know that you can now access your development record on HR21?

You will find the steps to do this on the HR21 Guide on Connects. This will be useful to help you prepare for the Our Time to Talk discussion or if you are applying for a post and need a note of any training courses you have been on.

# Learning and Development Survey



Thank you to everyone who took the time to reply to our Learning and Development survey conducted to better understand the needs of our Services.



## You say, we did . . .

### Challenges faced when joining virtual training sessions

As a response to some of the challenges faced when joining virtual sessions, we now issue MS Teams invitations from 09.30 to 16.00 for our one-day courses. This allows the attendee to block book time in their diary and protects their wellbeing. In addition, the invitations give guidance on session timings and remind participants to ensure they have a quiet space (either at home or in a meeting room) for the duration of the session in order to limit distractions and allow full participation whilst also ensuring confidentiality.

### Resilience

In response to the requests for resilience and managing an agile team training, a half day face-to-face course *Building Individual and Team Resilience* is under development. This course will cover resilience, physical and emotional check-ins on yourself and your team, managing worries and the power of positive thinking and feedback. It will also highlight support available from North Ayrshire Council.

### MS Teams functionality

In response to the requests about MS Teams functionality signposting, more information can be found in the MS Teams tutorials available on Office 365 project on Connects, Digi gurus are also available to assist. Our Employee Journey **Induction Information** on Connects now includes information for new employees which assists them in the use of O365, saving documents and calendar access and visibility.

# Pregnancy Loss Pledge



North Ayrshire Council has signed the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge, by taking the pledge we agree to meet the Miscarriage Association's standard, which asks that employers endeavour to create a supportive work environment, understand and implement the rules around pregnancy-related leave, and have a policy or guidance in place and support people and their partners back to work.

Our Pregnancy Loss guide is available on Connects and is intended to provide managers and employees with practical support during what can be a traumatic experience. The Guide provides parents who experience pregnancy loss with up to 10 days paid leave to allow them some time to come to terms with their loss. When employees are ready, there is advice on how to support a return to work and the guide sign posts external agencies who can provide information and further guidance.

Vicki Robinson, Deputy Director of the Miscarriage Association, said: "Pregnancy loss can be an extremely upsetting and isolating experience, so we very much welcome North Ayrshire Council's commitment to supporting its employees at this difficult time.

"Allowing women and their partners paid time off is a hugely important step. Knowing that you are entitled to paid leave is one less thing to worry about when you're already going through what might be a really tough time – emotionally and physically. "

"But it's not just about paid time off – it's also about the recognition. Signing the pledge sends a very clear message that the council understands that pregnancy loss can be a very significant life event and one that is deserving of acknowledgement and support."

## [Share this Newsletter](#)

**This Newsletter is on Connects and is distributed via the text messaging service.**

**Line Managers - you may wish to discuss the content of this update at your team / virtual team meetings, particularly where your teams don't have access to Connects.**

**Your support is much appreciated.**