

Conditions of Service

General

Conditions of service will vary from service to service. However, there are some general points to cover.

Conditions of service generally are those contained in the appropriate National Joint Council Schemes but have been supplemented in a number of areas by locally agreed conditions. The relevant Handbooks are available for reference in all departments.

Office Hours

The normal working week is currently 37 hours. Council offices are generally open to the public from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (4.30p.m on Friday). The majority of office staff are able to take part in the Councils flexible working hours scheme. Elsewhere, fixed hours or shift working may be operated according to the needs of a particular service.

Annual Leave

The basic annual leave entitlement is thirty-one working days plus public holidays which fall within the annual leave year (1 April – 31 March).

Sick Pay

Most employees are covered by the provisions of the nationally agreed sick pay schemes which allow periods of absence on full pay and half pay according to length of service. The maximum is six months full and six months half pay but can be extended in special circumstances at the Council's discretion.

Pension

New employees are required to choose a pension arrangement to which they will contribute on taking up appointment. This choice will be: -

- The Local Government Pensions Scheme
- The State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS)
- A Personal Pension arrangement

On appointment you will automatically be added to the Local Government Pension Scheme. If you opt out within three months of joining the LGPS, you will receive a refund via the payroll. If you opt out after three months of joining and before two years of membership, a refund must be obtained from the Durham Pension Fund – the Pension Administrator. If you do not opt out before 2 years you will not be eligible to receive a refund of your contributions but will instead be given deferred benefits within the Scheme. If you decide to opt out of the Scheme your employment, earnings and age will be monitored in line with automatic enrolment guidelines and we may need to write to you again to ask you to join the pension scheme.

Medical Examination

Before commencing your employment, you will need to complete a medical questionnaire and may be subject to a medical examination.

Probation

New entrants to Local Government will be required to complete a six month probationary period unless you have 12 months previous continuous local government service.

Equal Opportunities

The Council is working for equality. Applications are welcomed from all persons regardless of gender or gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion or belief, social origin, pregnancy and maternity provided they have the necessary attributes to do the job.

Payment of Wages and Salaries

Persons regarded as salaried are paid monthly in arrears on the last working day of the month. All payments are made by credit transfer direct to a nominated bank or building society.

Politically Restricted Posts

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 designate certain posts as politically restricted. If this is the case it will be detailed on the job description and means that you would be disqualified from being a member of a Local Authority, the House of Commons or of the European Parliament. Further information is available upon request.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working for the Council. This will depend on the nature of the post and the circumstances and background of your offence(s). To assist the Council in determining the suitability of your employment, certain posts are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. If this is the case an appropriate statement will appear in the recruitment advertisement.

Social Worker Posts Only

Probation

Social Workers within two years of qualification appointed to permanent posts or temporary posts for a minimum of 6 months will be required to register onto the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. In the case of permanent posts, continued employment will be subject to successful completion of the programme which normally takes 12 months.

If you have already successfully completed the programme, you will be required to produce a copy of the relevant certificate issued by The College of Social Work or Department for Education or (from August 2018) Skills for Care.

Office Hours

[Adults posts only] Due to changes in legislation, there is significant emphasis on health and social care working together to make services available outside the standard hours for 7 days a week. Working patterns may be subject to change in order to meet these statutory requirements and this will provide real opportunities for flexibility and improved balance between work duties and interests / commitments outside of work.