

**CHANGES TO THE LOCAL SUPPORT STAFF HANDBOOK****Joint Report of the Personnel Adviser and Chief Constable**

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**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the changes to the content of the current local Support Staff Handbook.

**2 BACKGROUND**

The content of the local Support Staff Handbook was originally agreed by the Chief Constable and Police Authority in 1996, and contained information relating to support staff terms and conditions of employment. It was established in mid-2001 that a joint review of the Handbook would be appropriate, and a representative team was formed comprising Personnel Services' staff, Administrative Services Managers, a Police Authority representative, and Staff Association officials.

The exercise commenced with a review of the existing format and content. Obsolete information was removed, some clarification was added and the format of the document was rearranged to facilitate ease of reference. Group members worked to a philosophy that it would be desirable to support work-life balance considerations wherever possible, and began examining issues which could be addressed in support of that aim. Those issues initially addressed are outlined below:

**i) Adverse Weather Conditions**

When attendance at the normal place of work is prevented by adverse weather conditions, support staff must contact their supervisor no later than one hour after normal starting time, to request annual leave.

Where possible, however, support staff must report to the nearest alternative Northumbria Police Area Command or other staffed office, no later than one hour after normal starting time, and request duties to be allocated. If no duties are available, the remainder of that day/shift may be regarded as authorised paid absence from work. Alternatively staff may request annual leave, at short notice, on such occasions if they are wary about the prospect of travelling.

**ii) Bereavement Leave**

Support staff are allowed up to five days' bereavement leave with pay at management discretion, taking into account:

- The closeness of the employee's relationship to the deceased.
- The degree to which the employee is involved in responsibilities arising from the bereavement.
- The geographical location of the funeral.

**iii) Non-Regular Forces Annual Camp**

All support staff are provided with an entitlement of two weeks additional leave with pay for the purposes of attending Annual Camp, rather than differentiating between those staff who joined the organisation before and after 1 September 1996.

**iv) Compassionate Leave**

Support staff may receive up to five days compassionate leave with pay at management discretion, for reasons other than circumstances linked to bereavement, for example a sudden illness of a family member, a breakdown in childcare arrangements or other serious domestic emergency.

**3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

No adverse equal opportunities implications have been identified and the rationale adopted supports the overall force aim of supporting diversity wherever possible and creating systems which support work-life balance.

**4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Although there are no direct Human Rights implications arising from this report, these changes may be said to support the force obligation to uphold the right to respect for private and family life.

**5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

**6 RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the content of this report.