



# BASIC RULES

A Guide for Employees



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**  
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

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# Welcome to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, I hope that you will enjoy working for the Council.

The Council is the largest employer in the area, employing over 14, 000 people and as you can imagine there are lots of policies and procedures in place. There is also a specific Code of Practice for Social Care Workers and a Code of Conduct that applies to all Local Government Employees introduced by the Welsh Government in 2001. All of which are in place to help both managers and employees understand what is expected of them.

This guide, however, is intended to highlight the 'basic rules' that all employees are expected to follow, it does not replace any of the policies or procedures or the Care Council for Wales Code of Practice for Social Care Workers and Welsh Government Code of Conduct but is intended to supplement them.

Your manager will cover any specific rules and/or policies that relate your particular job or workplace during your induction.

The guidance below sets out the basic rules that you need to know when you start work with the Council.

## Appearance

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The Council does not have a formal dress code but as outlined in the disciplinary rules policy all employees are expected to achieve a standard of dress that is appropriate to their work and to maintain reasonable standards of personal hygiene.

There are so many different roles within the Council that it is not easy to have a 'one rule for all' in respect of dress but there are some basic 'rules of thumb' that can be applied such as

- if you are supplied with a uniform then you should wear it whilst in work
- it is vitally important that you wear any protective clothing supplied to ensure that you are kept safe in work
- you should avoid any tee shirts or other items of clothing that may have images that could be deemed as offensive or expressing support for a particular political party or point of view.

Your manager should explain what's expected of you during your induction but if in doubt just ask.

## Attendance

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The Council provides a variety of services to the people who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf and even if you don't work directly with the public you will play a role in supporting the delivery of these services. You must be in work whenever you are expected to be there.

Many people rely on the Council and it is important that all employees' turn up for work every time they are expected and let their manager know if they can't be in work for any reason.

There are a number of reasons why you may not be able to come in to work, you could be ill, have a family crisis, or one of your children could become ill unexpectedly for example, and there are policies in place that cover all these eventualities.

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However, hopefully, these times will be few and far between and you will be able to turn up to work when you are expected, but just in case you should make sure that you know who you need to report to or ask permission for time off if you need it. If you are not sure just ask your manager.

## **Behaviour**

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All employees are expected to behave professionally, have respect for colleagues and service users and should deal with each other sympathetically, efficiently and without bias.

You have a right to be treated with respect, and to be protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. You also have the responsibility to treat others fairly and with respect.

Bullying and/or harassment of any kind towards colleagues or service users will not be tolerated.

Anyone found to be behaving in this way can be disciplined; if the case is proven then it is possible that it will lead to dismissal and possibly legal action if the case involves abuse of vulnerable people or discrimination of any kind.

## **Confidentiality**

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You may work in a service where you will have access to information about people; this could be around the needs of individuals you provide a service to or about colleagues and other employees depending on your role.

You should not divulge any personal or confidential information to anyone outside of the workplace and should only share the information inside the workplace on a 'need to know' basis.

Confidential information should be stored appropriately e.g. paper documents should be in a locked cabinet or drawer and

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confidential information stored on a computer should be password protected.

There is specific legislation on data protection that covers this area, if you are unsure how it might apply to your particular role then ask your manager to explain.

You may also be involved in the various decision making processes within the Council. There are set procedures on how these decisions are communicated and it is important that you do not give out any information outside of those, again if in doubt ask your manager.

The Council has an Information Management Plan which is regularly updated through electronic bulletins; it is available on the Council Intranet or from your manager.

Basically employees have a duty to maintain confidentiality and must not disclose any information obtained in the course of their employment to any third party for any unauthorised reason.

However if you are concerned about the ways things are done and feel that it could be considered as malpractice or illegal you can use the Whistle blowing Policy to raise your concerns.

## **Flexi-time**

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The Council's flexi-time working hour's policy does not give entitled employees an automatic right to decide what hours they work, accrue large credits or large deficits. It is in fact designed to give employees more flexibility in working hours to assist in dealing with personal circumstances and responsibilities. Any flexibility needed should be agreed in advance with the line manager and employees are expected to manage their hours effectively.

## Hospitality and Gifts

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There are very strict rules covering hospitality and gifts and a section in the Local Government Act that quite clearly sets out that employees are forbidden to accept any fee or reward other than their proper pay for doing anything connected to their job.

Sometimes employees will be given small gifts such as diaries, pens or similar and it is fine to accept these but care should be taken that any gift or hospitality offered cannot be viewed as any attempt to influence how a service is delivered or how decisions are made. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

If there is any doubt about whether a gift may be accepted, the gift should be politely and tactfully refused and you should inform your manager.

## Office Hours

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All Council offices have to be open and available to the public between 9:00am and 5:00pm if you work in an office you and your colleagues in discussion with your manager will be expected to ensure this happens.

You will be made aware of your contracted hours of work on appointment and be advised whether or not you are office based.

## Personal Opinions

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The Council accepts that every employee has a right to their own opinion but you should not allow any private or personal interest to affect how you do your job or how you may make decisions.

Whilst it is accepted that employees will discuss various matters and interests, you should ensure that any such discussions are amicable, respectful and do not contain any opinions that may be considered offensive or contravene the Council's Equality and Dignity at Work Policies.

## **Punctuality**

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It may seem obvious to you that you have to be in work at the time you are expected but it is important to emphasise that being late for work can have a direct impact on how services are delivered and the people you work with who may have to cover your role until you get in. Being late on a regular basis can also lead to you being disciplined.

If you have genuine problems that are affecting your ability to get to work on time you should speak to your manager who may be able to help.

## **Smoking and Alcohol**

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It is against the law to smoke in all enclosed workplaces in the UK which are required to be smoke free. This includes company cars and vans.

The Council does not allow employees to drink alcohol whilst at work or whilst on a break during work (such as lunch times), neither should you be in work if you are still under the influence of alcohol following a night out. These rules are in place to protect you and your colleagues.

The Council has specific policies dealing with smoking and alcohol at work which are available from your manager.

## **Social Networking**

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If you have access to the internet as part of your job role you are not allowed to access social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or similar.

If you have a personal mobile telephone that allows you to access such sites you should not do so whilst in work, neither should you spend your work time texting friends and family.

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Whilst it is acceptable for you to put Rhondda Cynon Taf Council as your place of work on your profile you should not make comments about your job, colleagues, things that happen in work or put any information that may be considered confidential to your job role on your status or in any public forum.

You should also ensure that whatever comments you make cannot be considered as bringing the Council into disrepute or contravene Council policies as this type of comment can lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

## **Use of Council Equipment and Facilities**

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The equipment and facilities provided to you as an employee are there for you to carry out your job and under no circumstances should they be used for personal use which is a disciplinary offence.

## **Welsh Language**

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The majority of Council employees will use English in their day to day roles; however the Council is required to facilitate an equal service in both Welsh and English so some employees will either need to have basic knowledge of Welsh or will work entirely using the Welsh language.

The language requirements of your role will have been identified when you were appointed. Welsh language lessons are available to employees if needed to support them in their role.

## Working for Someone Else

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Some employees will have it written in their contract of employment that they cannot take paid or unpaid employment outside of the Council but this does not apply to everyone.

It is possible for a Council employee to have another job outside of the Council but it cannot be in conflict with your own job, have an adverse affect of the work of the Council or contravene the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Working Time Regulations.

If you are considering taking another job outside of the Council then you should check with your line manager whether it's appropriate.

### DISCLAIMER

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**These rules are for guidance only and do not replace your contractual obligations, Council policies and procedures or the Care Council for Wales Code of Practice for Social Care Workers and the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.**





For more information contact:

**Human Resources**

**Tŷ Elai**

**Dinas Isaf Industrial Estate**

**Williamstown**

**CF40 1NY**

**Telephone: 01443 424100**