

# HR & OD POLICIES

human resources and organisational development



## Death in Service Procedure

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## 1. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees of the Council.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The death of an employee is distressing for all concerned and needs to be approached with utmost sensitivity. All employees of the Council must ensure that unnecessary distress is not caused to the relatives of the deceased and that colleagues (and clients if necessary) are supported during what will undoubtedly be a difficult time.

Death in Service falls into a number of classifications:

- Death following illness
- Sudden death outside work
- Fatality at work
- Missing person presumed dead

In cases of sudden death outside of work, fatality at work, missing person presumed dead, the Police, who have been specially trained to deal with these matters, will normally undertake to notify the next of kin.

The immediate concern following the death of an employee is to offer support and guidance to the bereaved spouse / partner/ family members and contact should be established as soon as possible following the notification of death.

### Nominated Officer

When a death is reported, the Director must designate at least one Nominated Officer. The Nominated Officer will be responsible for maintaining contact with all parties as appropriate, coordinating all information and ensuring that procedures are followed. The Nominated Officer should be at a senior level within the Service and be able to deal sensitively with people who may be in a distressed state. The Nominated Officer will be responsible for communicating the news to the deceased's immediate team.

### 3. SUPPORT FOR COLLEAGUES

Colleagues of the deceased may experience problems in coming to terms with the death. Recovery of individuals and teams can be aided by providing support as soon as possible after the incident. Appropriate grief management can help support and guide employees. This can be done in a number of ways:

#### **Sharing Information**

- Employees will need to be given as much information as possible. Managers should make an effort to get information and to share it with close colleagues in a timely manner.
- If managers are unable to get the required information they can simply communicate this to employees as this will be more comforting than being told nothing.
- Communicate information to employees who are temporarily away from work e.g. on holiday or on maternity leave, where it is thought to be appropriate.

#### **Suggest an area where colleagues can go to take time out**

- This allows all affected employees a chance to discuss the loss and share stories about the deceased. This aids the mourning process as it allows employees to deal with their shock.
- Sharing grief with others can make the mourning process less painful and stops employees suffering alone.
- Providing a private area also gives employees a place to go if they become tearful whilst working. This can stop them feeling like they are on display to others in the workplace.
- Employees wishing to attend a funeral can do so by submitting a Special Leave request. It might be appropriate for the Service to nominate a representative who would attend the funeral. In case of several team members attending, special dispensation can be sought from HR to waive the completion of numerous Special Leave forms for attendance at the funeral. For all queries on Special Leave please refer to the [Special Leave Procedure](#) or contact [HR](#).

## Employee Assistance Programme

The Council has a confidential [Employee Assistance Programme](#) through which individuals can access the services of a counsellor. This service can be accessed by telephone 24 hours per day by Council employees and by their family members over the age of 16. In certain cases it can be arranged for a Counsellor to attend the workplace for either a half day or day to speak with employees if required.

## Translation and Interpretation Services

Translation and interpretation services are available to the Next of Kin if their first language that is not English. Further information on how to access the services can be found on [Arcadia](#).

## Assistance available to individuals other than employees of Aberdeenshire Council

Consideration should also be given to the needs of clients, e.g. a need to support school pupils in the event of the death of a teacher, or care home residents in the event of the death of a carer. Support to others who are affected by a bereavement can be sought from external organisations that specialise in this area, for example support for school children and parents. Contact details are listed at the end of this procedure.

## Support from HR

HR will be available to provide guidance and support to both managers and employees dealing with the death of a colleague.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### Notification of Death

Any employee who becomes aware of the death of a colleague should advise his/her own manager who will arrange for the deceased's Director to be advised.

### Responsibilities of the Employing Service / Nominated Officer

The Director will assign a Nominated Officer. The Director of the Service / Head of Service is required to send an initial letter of condolence to the bereaved family of the employee.

**The Nominated Officer must liaise with Payroll and HR as soon as possible to ensure that all relevant facts related to payments are collated. Once Payroll has been notified any pay due will be deferred and thereafter the appropriate payment, taking into account annual leave, etc., will be paid to the next of kin or the estate following the completion of the appropriate forms. Immediate notification of the death of an employee is crucial for payroll processes as it will prevent any unnecessary delays or overpayments.**

The Nominated Officer will undertake the actions as appropriate:

- Notifies the [Payroll](#) section by telephone or email of the death of the employee. Emails should be marked as urgent and have the employee name, payroll number and 'Death in Service' in the subject line.
- Arranges for a termination form to be prepared and uploaded to askHR as soon as possible. This will ensure timeous preparation of required information of final salary payments and pension calculations, and that no overpayments are made. The EMIS form gives Payroll details of any outstanding annual leave / public holiday entitlement, timesheets, travel and subsistence or overtime claims.
- Information should not be given to a next of kin in relation to any potential entitlements until this has been verified by HR or relevant pension scheme provider.
- Confirms whether the employee is a pension scheme member (Local Government Pension Scheme or Scottish Teachers Superannuation Scheme). If the employee was a member of the SPPA (Teachers' Pension Scheme) or Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Payroll will inform the relevant pension scheme of the employee's death. Information on estimates regarding financial issues or timescales should not be given unless confirmed through Payroll/Pension/SPPA. The Payroll section will take the necessary action for the next of kin to receive the relevant information / payments from the SPPA. No employee of Aberdeenshire Council should attempt to estimate or calculate benefits.
- Establishes the details of the next of kin / representative. These should be held by the Service and kept up to date.
- Notifies link HR Advisor from team supporting the Service. HR Advisor will notify Travel & Benefits team who will ascertain if the employee has an active Employee Benefits agreement. The Travel & Benefits Team will assume responsibility for managing any employee benefit related implications.
- Establishes details of any Council property to be returned e.g. ID badge, mobile phone, computer equipment and keys to the office. Notifies the Next of kin and

arranges the return of the items in a reasonable timescale adequate to the circumstances.

- Informs Corporate Communications Team of the death.
- Notifies [ICT](#) to disable access to network and software and advises who to divert incoming emails to.
- Collects and returns employee's personal items to the family.
- Updates Arcadia phone book entry (the timing of this and subsequent recruitment should be undertaken with sensitivity and communicated to the family as appropriate).

## Responsibilities of Payroll Section

[Payroll](#) will be responsible for informing either the LGPS / SPPA or the next of kin of the following:

- Confirm to the Nominated Officer if the deceased employee is a member of the LGPS / SPPA / Simply Health Benefits scheme. Memberships are confirmed in the first letter sent by Payroll.
- Notify the LGPS or SPPA of the employee's death.
- Send a letter ([Payroll Bereavement 1<sup>st</sup> letter](#)) to the next of kin asking to confirm details of person / solicitors dealing with the estate.
- Following confirmation from the next of kin / solicitor arrange for balance of salary / wages to be paid as instructed by the next of kin.
- Send a letter ([Payroll Bereavement 2<sup>nd</sup> letter](#)) to the next of kin with details of final payments due to the estate of the deceased employee. This will be subject to the appropriate documentation i.e. timesheets, overtime or expenses claim forms and an EMIS termination form being submitted timeously by the Service. Please note, any debts due to the Council i.e. car loans, payroll mandates or external debts ( Arrestment of Wages, Child Support Orders etc.) are deducted before the final payments are confirmed.
- Advise the Nominated Officer once a letter with details of final payments due to the estate was issued.

Responsibilities are illustrated in the following flowcharts within the Resource Pack - Service, Payroll & HR

## Responsibilities of Pensions Section

Once notified, the Pension section will contact the next of kin to request relevant certificates, establish entitlement and notify the beneficiary of benefits payable. They will be responsible for obtaining all relevant paperwork with regard to establishing pension beneficiaries. This will be done in liaison with the Nominated Officer.

## Responsibilities of Corporate Communications

Corporate communications will deal with any press interest and issue any press releases as appropriate. Employees should not comment publicly in the press on the death of another employee and should direct any queries to the [Head of Corporate Communications](#).

## 5. SIMPLY HEALTH BENEFITS

If the employee was a member of the Simply Health Benefits Scheme, the next of kin may be entitled to a funeral benefit. Membership can be confirmed by the Nominated Officer through Payroll, however due to the Simply Health policy, further information can only be disclosed to the next of kin. This can be done by calling Simply Health on 0800 056 0366 or by visiting [www.simplyhealth.co.uk](http://www.simplyhealth.co.uk)

## 6. FATAL ACCIDENT AT WORK

In addition to the procedures outlined above, the following should also be taken into account in the event of a fatal accident:

- Accident must be reported to the Director of the Service who must immediately contact the Council's Health & Safety Team on 01224 664118 and the Health & Safety Executive 01224 252500
- Services should refer to the Accident or Incident reporting guidance
- The accident itself will be dealt with under the auspices of the 'Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (R.I.D.D.O.R).
- The accident site should not be disturbed /removed until permission is given from the appropriate officer in charge

## Insurance Cover

- In the event of an employee sustaining a fatal injury in the course of his / her employment, the incident will require to be reviewed for consideration under the Council's Insurance provisions.



- Notification and cause of death should be given to the Head of Finance for onward transmission to the Council's Insurance Section.

## 7. EMPLOYEE MISSING PRESUMED DEAD

In circumstances where an employee is missing and presumed dead please refer to the [Attendance Management Procedure](#) and [Missing Person Factsheet](#).

## 8. TERMINAL ILLNESS

In circumstances where an employee has a terminal illness [Attendance Management Guidance](#) should be followed.

## 9. SUPPORT CONTACTS

### [askHR](#)

HR or Payroll can be contacted through asHR Portal via the above link

Phone: 01467 534400

### [Employee Assistance Programme](#)

Phone: **03303 800658** or **0800 023 9324**

Website: <https://vivup.tercltd.co.uk?CODE=107808>

### [Local Government Pension Scheme \(North East Scotland Pension Fund\)](#)

Phone: 01224 264264

Email: [pensions@nespf.org.uk](mailto:pensions@nespf.org.uk)

### [Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme \(Scottish Public Pensions Agency\)](#)

Phone: 01896 893000

### [Scottish Association for Mental Health \(SAMH\)](#)

Phone: 0141 530 1000

Email: [enquire@samh.org.uk](mailto:enquire@samh.org.uk)

### [People Experiencing Trauma and Loss \(PETAL\)](#)

Phone: 01698 324502

Email: [info@petalsupport.com](mailto:info@petalsupport.com)

### [Grampian Child Bereavement Network](#)

Phone: 01224 594099

Email: [Coordinator@gcbtn.org.uk](mailto:Coordinator@gcbtn.org.uk)

# Death in Service

## Procedure

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
28-07-2010	-	Creation of all documents
11-11-2014	28-07-2010	Amendment to pensions contact number
04-10-2016	11-11-2014	Revision of procedure
21-03-2018	04-10-2016	Revision of procedure
21-03-2018	04-10-2016	Revision of procedure (retiral and contacts)
02-09-2022	21-03-2018	Update of EAP information