

Smoke Free Environment Policy

Introduction

Bassetlaw District Council recognises the rights of all staff to work in a smoke free environment and has operated a policy of no smoking within its buildings and vehicles for many years. The Council is committed to promoting the good health of its employees and the provision of a safe working environment. The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires that the Council takes reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of employees and members of the public visiting Council premises.

Part 1 of the Health Act 2006, effective from 1 July 2007, makes virtually all (substantially) enclosed public and work places, including vehicles, smoke-free.

Background

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in the UK. Some 1400 people die each year from smoking related illnesses in Nottinghamshire, costing the local NHS service £20 million. Around 30% of people in Nottinghamshire smoke, well over the national average of 27% and the Government has set a target to reduce local smoking rates to 21% by 2010. The Council has a leading role in Bassetlaw to improve public health, and reduce the preventable death, disability and disease that smoking causes each year in the community.

Second hand smoke (passive smoking) is a known health hazard. In 2004, the Government's Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH) reported that increased risk to non-smokers of lung cancer from exposure to second-hand smoke was 24%, and the increased risk of heart disease 25%. has been shown to cause lung cancer and heart disease in non-smokers, as well as many other illnesses and minor conditions. The Council is committed to protecting all employees from the harmful effects of second hand smoke and ensuring that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the smoke free regulations.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees and elected members. Where the General Policy mentions staff or employees, for the purpose of that section of the Policy this will apply to workers engaged through an agency, employment organisation, or by a contractor or other organisation, and volunteers.

Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To contribute to a healthy and safe environment for the Council's employees.
- To ensure that staff, elected members, service users and visitors to Bassetlaw District Council's premises benefit from a smoke-free environment.
- To protect employees from the hazards of second-hand smoke inhalation whilst at work.
- To heighten staff awareness of the health risks associated with smoking.
- To provide opportunities, assistance and support to those employees who wish to give up or cut down smoking.

General Policy

1. Under this Policy, all employees are prohibited from:
 - Smoking during their working hours
 - Smoking on any part of the Council's premises and grounds, including car parks that service Council buildings
 - Smoking in Council vehicles, whether owned, leased or hired by the Council
 - Smoking around entrances to Council premises
2. Smoking in private vehicles during work time is strongly discouraged. Employees are required not to smoke if there is one or more passengers in the car.
3. Smoking breaks will not be permitted, but this will be subject to a phased reduction in smoking breaks over a 3 months period, following which the situation will be reviewed.¹ Appropriate support and assistance will be given to employees who currently smoke, to help them stop smoking.
4. Smoking shelters will not be provided on Council premises
5. No sales of tobacco products will be allowed on any Council premises, including the provision of vending machines.
6. Staff members are expected to inform service users and visitors of the Policy. However, they are not expected to enter into any confrontation that may put their personal safety at risk.
7. This Policy is intended to benefit all staff, elected members, service users and visitors, and all staff are responsible for its continued implementation.
8. Managers in each work location must play their part in promoting the Policy. If the manager identifies that an employee genuinely needs assistance in adhering to the

¹ During the three months period of phased reduction in smoking, employees will not be paid for time taken during smoking breaks, and are required to clock out upon departure and clock in upon their return. During smoking breaks employees should refrain from (1) smoking on any part of the Council's premises and grounds, including car parks that service Council buildings, (2) smoking in Council buildings, whether owned, leased or hired by the Council and (3) smoking around entrances to Council premises.

Policy they can draw their attention to the available support and assistance outlined below.

Third Party Premises

Employees required to visit other premises, both commercial and domestic, as part of their duties should advise the people responsible for the premises of the Council's Smoke Free Environment Policy when arranging a visit. Although the Council has a duty of care to protect its employees, it cannot control the smoke free environment policy on other premises. Employees and/or managers should aim for the people visited to arrange for a non-smoking area to be provided for the duration of the visit. Where this is not possible, the visited should be asked to refrain from smoking for the duration of the visit. Any employee has the right to terminate a visit/interview if in his/her opinion he/she is being adversely affected by second-hand smoke.

Support and Assistance for Smokers

The Council recognises that 70% of smokers want to quit, and that nicotine is a highly addictive substance, therefore staff will need support to stop smoking. The Council is committed to encouraging staff to stop smoking, and the best way that we can do this as an employer is to introduce restrictions on smoking during working hours. In addition, a range of support options is available for employees who would like help to stop smoking. In particular, the Council will:

- develop and publicise a Health at Work fact sheet on giving up smoking, and explaining the health risks associated with smoking
- provide counselling and support for employees experiencing difficulties in giving up smoking, as requested;
- publicise the availability of further advice and support through this Policy and periodically through other communication processes.

Further advice and support on stopping smoking can be obtained from:

- NHS's 'NEW LEAF', which provides a free 6-8 week support programme including specially trained advisors in the local area who offer support, encouragement, information and friendly advice. Freephone New Leaf : 0800 3897712.
- www.gosmokefree.co.uk
- NHS Smoking Helpline : Freephone 0800 169 0169

Enforcement

Breaches of this Policy may be considered as misconduct under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.