

SMOKING AT WORK POLICY

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Introduction

We recognise that the health, safety and welfare of employees, Councillors, sub-contractors and anyone else directly affected by our organisation's operations are of prime importance. We have therefore developed this dedicated smoking policy which conforms to the requirements of the smoke-free legislation.

The Policy

This policy is mandatory and applicable to all employees, Councillors as well as sub-contractors who undertake activities on behalf of the organisation and any visitors to/customers on our premises.

Prohibition on smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited on Council owned or managed premises, including at entrances. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes") and vaporisers/E-cigarettes.

Council employees are prohibited from smoking/vaping in service users' private homes at all times.

Smokers are restricted to taking one short smoking break in the morning and one in the afternoon, with a maximum of 10 minutes per break. You should inform your manager if you wish to take a smoking break and ensure that there is sufficient cover before taking a break.

Online meetings

Visibly Smoking/Vaping is strictly prohibited during any online meeting/ training.

Vehicles

Smoking is not permitted in company vehicles.

Homeworkers

Homeworkers are not required to refrain from smoking during the course of work that is carried out for the organisation in their home, unless they invite others into an area of their home for work purposes.

Electronic cigarettes

We acknowledge that some employees may wish to make use of electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes") in the workplace, particularly as an aid to giving up smoking. E-cigarettes are battery-powered products that release a visible vapour that contains liquid nicotine that is inhaled by the user.

Although they fall outside the scope of smoke-free legislation, we prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace. Our rationale for a ban on e-cigarettes is that:

- although they do not produce smoke, e-cigarettes produce a vapour that could provide an annoyance or health risk to other employees;

Assistance for employees to give up smoking

The Council is committed to providing opportunities and support for staff who wish to give up smoking. Help to stop smoking is available to any staff member. This service will be regularly publicised on the Council's intranet system and in other Council buildings. Staff interested in stopping smoking can get help by:

- Ringing or emailing the Reading Stop Smoking Service on 0118 952 5400
- Obtaining information from General Practitioners and the Stop Smoking Advisors in the practices
- Contacting the NHS Smoking Helpline 0800 169 0169

Managers will allow staff to work flexibly or take time off to attend smoking cessation classes as far as is reasonably practicable.

Support is available, free of charge, to all employees and family members, and elected members through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) – contact 0800 028 0199 and/or go to the EAP page on the intranet

Reading also now has its own smoking cessation service based at the Primary Care Trust premises at Broad Street Mall, Reading (telephone 0118 952 5400).

Non-compliance

Any infringement of these rules by an employee may result in appropriate disciplinary action, which will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Employees are also reminded that it is a criminal offence to smoke in smoke-free areas, with a fixed penalty of £50 or prosecution and a fine of up to £200.