

EMERGENCY TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS POLICY

1.0 Purpose of policy

1.1 Employees have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with emergencies involving their dependants. The following is the Council's policy on permitting employees to take time off for this purpose, whilst ensuring the Council's operations are not unduly affected. The term 'dependant' is prescribed in law and replicated in this policy. The policy also sets out areas of flexibility that the Council may adopt in order to support employees. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking emergency time off work to deal with the needs of dependants.

1.2 Employees who use time off for dependants for reasons other than that for which the statutory right is intended may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

1.3 This policy does not apply where employees act as carers on an ongoing basis or in respect of general parenting duties.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 It is not possible to define what a reasonable amount of time is because this will depend on the specific circumstances in question. The same event may require varying amounts of time off for different people, or even the same person if it happens more than once on different occasions.

2.2 A dependant may include:

- spouse/partner
- child
- parent
- person who lives in the same household but is not a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- those who reasonably rely on you for the provision of care or for assistance if they fall ill. This could be, for example, an elderly neighbour.

3.0 Entitlement

3.1 Employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of un-paid time off to take action in relation to unforeseen events involving a dependant.

3.2 The right to time off extends only to that which is needed to make arrangements in the event of an emergency. It is anticipated that this may involve a few hours but no more than one or two days, depending on the circumstances. Arrangements to cover any time off needed in excess of this because of an emergency will need to be discussed with the Clerk.

3.3 The Council understands that this expectation of time may have to be extended if the employee is responsible for making funeral arrangements.

4.0 Events covered by this policy

4.1 An unforeseen emergency, for the purposes of this policy, can cover various events in an employee's life, for example:

- to help when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted (including mental illness or injury)
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured

- when a dependant dies
- to cope with the unexpected breakdown of arrangements for caring for a dependant and
- to deal with an incident involving a child of the employee which occurs unexpectedly during school hours or in circumstances where the school has responsibility for the child.

4.2 Time off for emergencies not involving a dependant e.g. a flood at home, is not covered by this policy.

4.3 Where an employee has to take an extended period of time to care for a dependant, they may take annual leave or apply for unpaid leave.

5.0 Pay for time off work to deal with dependants' emergencies

5.1 There is no legal obligation on the Council to pay employees for time off for dependants, however the Council will consider each case and may grant paid time off work.

6.0 Notification

6.1 As soon as is reasonably practicable, an employee taking emergency time off work to deal with an emergency relating to a dependant must contact the Clerk to inform them of the need to take time off for dependants.

6.2 The reason for the employee's absence and its expected duration should be provided. Failure to do this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. The Clerk may require evidence of the need to take time off, although this may have to be provided retrospectively.