**Parental Leave**

This is a statutory entitlement for parents where they can take **unpaid** leave to look after their child’s welfare e.g. this could include for spending time with the child, looking at new schools, settling a child into a new school or for spending time with family members i.e. grandparents.

An employee is entitled to take 18 weeks’ leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

Time off must be taken as a whole week (not individual days unless the child is disabled), with a maximum 4 weeks per child per year (unless agreed with the Council). A week is the equivalent to the employee’s usual working week and pro-rated for part-time employees.

Parental leave applies to each child not to an individual’s job. For instance, where someone joins the Council and they have used 10 weeks parental leave with a previous employer, they can use up to 8 weeks (the remaining balance of the 18 week entitlement) with the Council, if they’re eligible.

To be eligible for Parental Leave the following criteria must be met –

* The person must be an employee (not a “worker”) and have at least 1 year’s service with the Council
* The child must be under 18 years’ old
* The employee must be named on the child’s birth/adoption certificate (proof can be requested prior to first period of leave)
* Have or expect to have parental responsibility

Note: Both foster carers and kinship carers qualify for Parental Leave provided they meet the first two bullet points above.

The employee must give at least **21 days’** notice of their intention to take Parental Leave and provide the intended start and end dates.

The Council can delay the start of the period of Parental Leave where granting the leave would cause significant disruption to the Service.

However, it can’t be delayed by the Council -

* If there is no “significant reason”
* When it is requested by the child’s father immediately after the birth/adoption of the child
* Where it impacts the employee’s eligibility for Parental Leave i.e. after the child’s 18th birthday

If the Parental Leave is postponed by the Council, the manager must write to the employee within **7 days** from the date that the original request is received explaining the reasons for the change and suggesting a more suitable start date – which must be within 6 months of the original requested start date and in agreement with the employee. The Council cannot change the amount of leave that has been requested by the employee.