ABERDEEN

CITY COUNCIL

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICY

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Policy statement

The Council recognises that many employees have family related responsibilities that require to be balanced with their working lives. It aims to create a well-managed, flexible working environment that supports employees to meet both work and family commitments. It is recognised that family friendly provisions can have benefits both for employees through the provision of workplace flexibility and time off arrangements as well as for the organisation through increased employee commitment and lower labour turnover and absence. All statutory responsibilities will be adhered to in relation to the provisions in this policy and every effort made to ensure fairness and consistency in decision making.

Introduction

The Council has in place a suite of family friendly provisions designed to help ensure a healthy work life balance for employees and efficiency and effectiveness for the organisation. This policy contains details of these provisions.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Council apart from teachers and those under the SNCT conditions of service (where separate arrangements apply).

Core Principles

The Council will adhere to all its statutory responsibilities in relation to family-related employment legislation.

The Council will encourage employees to return to work after a period of family related leave and will attempt, where it is determined as practicable, to accommodate requests for flexible working.

Employees are expected to co-operate with management in the provision of information and in adhering to deadlines in relation to processes under this policy. Cases being administered under these provisions will be dealt with as promptly as possible to ensure that all statutory and other deadlines are met.

Every effort will be made to ensure fairness and consistency in decision making in relation to the provisions in this policy, as well as maintaining confidentiality. During meetings arising under the provisions in this policy, special allowance will be made for those employees whose first language is not English or who have difficulty expressing themselves. The same applies to employees with a disability.

Where an employee is dissatisfied with a decision under the provisions of this policy they have the right to raise a grievance under the Managing Grievances policy/procedure (or where applicable to use the appropriate process contained within a provision).

Provisions

1. Maternity Leave/Pay

These provisions apply to employees who are pregnant and following the birth of their child and comprise various entitlements in relation to leave and pay as well as both employer and employee statutory responsibilities in relation to notification and response etc.

Subject to meeting the qualifying criteria, the Council offers occupational maternity pay above the current statutory minimum.

Full details of the provisions, requirements and the administrative process for Maternity Leave and Pay are contained in a separate set of guidance notes on the Zone (also available from line managers).

Subject to meeting qualifying criteria, an employee can choose to end their Maternity Leave and Pay at a future date and share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and Pay with their partner or return to work early from Maternity Leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and Pay at a later date (see 4 below). The process for this is detailed in a separate set of guidance notes on Shared Parental Leave and Pay on the Zone (also available from line managers).

2. Adoption Leave/Pay

These provisions apply to employees who are newly adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement. They comprise various entitlements in relation to leave and pay as well as both employer and employee statutory responsibilities in relation to notification and response etc.

Subject to meeting the qualifying criteria, the Council offers occupational adoption pay above the current statutory minimum.

Full details of the provisions, requirements and the administrative process for Adoption Leave and Pay are contained in a separate set of guidance notes on the Zone (also available from line managers).

Subject to meeting qualifying criteria, an employee can choose to end their Adoption Leave and Pay at a future date and share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and Pay with their partner or return to work early from Adoption Leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and Pay at a later date (see 4 below). The process for this is detailed in a separate set of guidance notes on Shared Parental Leave and Pay on the Zone (also available from line managers).

3. Paternity Leave/Pay

These provisions apply to employees whose partner is pregnant, or who has been notified of a match for adoption or who is having a child through a surrogacy

arrangement, and comprise entitlements in relation to leave and pay as well as both employer and employee statutory responsibilities in relation to notification and response etc.

Subject to meeting the qualifying criteria, the Council offers occupational paternity pay just above the current statutory minimum.

Full details of the provisions, requirements and the administrative process for Paternity Leave and Pay are contained in a separate set of guidance notes on the Zone (also available from line managers).

4. Shared Parental Leave/Pay

These provisions apply to employees with babies due or matched with a child for adoption on or after 5 April 2015, who meet the qualifying criteria. They enable mothers/adopters to commit to ending their Maternity or Adoption Leave and Pay at a future date and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and Pay with their partner, or to return to work early from Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and Pay at a later date. The provisions allow employees the flexibility to choose how to share the care of their child with their partner during the first year of birth or adoption and enable them to be on leave at the same time or stop and start their leave, returning to work between periods of leave. They contain both employer and employee statutory responsibilities in relation to notification and response etc.

Subject to meeting qualifying criteria, the Council applies statutory Shared Parental Pay.

Full details of the provisions, requirements and the administrative process for Shared Parental Leave and Pay are contained in a separate set of guidance notes on the Zone (also available from line managers).

5. Parental Leave

Is a statutory entitlement for employees, with one year's service, where they can take unpaid leave to look after their child's welfare. The entitlement for each child is 18 weeks up to their 5th birthday, for each adopted child is 18 weeks up to their 18th birthday or 5th anniversary of the adoption, whichever is soonest, and for each disabled child is 18 weeks up to the child's 18th birthday.

Full details, are contained in the Special Leave provisions on the Zone (also available from line managers).

6. Time off for Dependant/Family Emergencies

There is a statutory right to unpaid reasonable time off to deal with unforeseen and emergency matters regarding a dependant. A dependant can be a spouse, partner, child, parent or someone who depends on the employee for care.

Reasonable time off should be no longer than 1 to 2 days. Where longer periods are required other leave provisions would be more applicable. Full details are contained in the Special Leave provisions on the Zone (also available from line managers).

7. Flexible Working

There is a statutory right for an employee to apply for flexible working if they have worked continuously for the Council for at least 26 weeks. The Council is positive about utilising a wide range of flexible working options and will deal with employee requests in a reasonable manner with efforts made to accommodate requests where determined as practicable. Requests may be refused where there is a good business reason for doing so, with there being a specified list of refusal reasons detailed in the Smarter Working Guidance on the Zone (also available from line managers). Employees can only make one application for flexible working per year, with the application process also shown in the Guidance along with details of the various flexible working options.

Review of the policy

Human Resources and Organisational Development will review this policy every three years. It will, nevertheless, be subject to continual review and amendment in the light of experience of its operation, employment best practice and statutory requirements. Changes will only be put into effect following the normal consultation arrangements.