



## **CARER'S LEAVE POLICY**

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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council recognises the importance of supporting staff who provide care to anyone who relies on them for care. This care that they give is unpaid.

### **2 AIM OF THE POLICY**

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to support carers in employment where possible, so that they are better able to balance their caring responsibility whilst fulfilling their employment commitments. This policy demonstrates a commitment on the part of the Council to help carers combine work with the care of others by offering them further flexibility to provide support.

### **3 SCOPE**

- 3.1 This policy applies to any employee who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child but not an employee who provides or intends to provide care under or by virtue of a contract or voluntary work.

### **4 KEY PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 The Council believes it has a responsibility to support employees who have caring responsibilities and will as flexible as possible in its approach, balancing each individual's circumstances and the needs of the Council.
- 4.2 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Equality Act includes measures to protect carers of disabled or elderly people from discrimination or harassment, including in the workplace.

### **5 UNPAID CARER'S LEAVE**

- 5.1 Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:
- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they are expected to need care for more than 3 months
  - a disability
  - care needs because of their old age

- 5.2 Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer. Their employment rights (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

## **6 HOW LONG EMPLOYEES CAN TAKE**

- 6.1 Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.
- 6.2 They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.
- 6.3 If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.
- 6.4 If an employee is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' leave to look after their child. This is separate to carer's leave.

## **7 HOW TO TAKE CARER'S LEAVE**

- 7.1 Employees need to give their employer notice before they want their leave to start.
- 7.2 If the request is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days.
- 7.3 If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. For example, if the request is for 2 days, the notice period must be at least 4 days.
- 7.4 The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts.
- 7.5 The request does not have to be in writing.
- 7.6 Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.

## **8 WHEN EMPLOYERS CAN DELAY CARER'S LEAVE**

- 8.1 Employers cannot refuse a carer's leave request but can ask the employee to take it at a different time. They can only do this if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the organisation.

## 8.2 If they delay it, the employer must:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to the employee within 7 days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave