

Worcester City Council

UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE

POLICY

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Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

1. Introduction

Worcester City Council is committed to promoting a positive attitude to work-life balance and offers eligible employees the right to unpaid time off work when they need to look after their children. This is called Unpaid Parental Leave.

Unpaid Parental Leave should not be confused with Shared Parental Leave or Paternity Leave (see separate policies).

2. Scope

This policy applies to qualifying employees who have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 18.

3. When could I use Unpaid Parental Leave?

Parental Leave is unpaid leave and should only be taken to care for the welfare of a child (up to their 18th birthday), for example you may wish to take leave to:

- spend quality time with your child
- stay with your child while they are in hospital or while recovering at home
- make school/childcare arrangements and to help them settle in.

4. What am I entitled to?

- A maximum of 4 weeks Unpaid Parental leave may be taken per child in any one year.
- You are entitled to up to 18 weeks of Unpaid Parental Leave per child up to their 18th birthday. For part time employees, a week is their normal working week (or for irregular weeks, it can be calculated by calculating the total number of days they work in a year divided by 52.143).
- Parental leave applies to each child not an individual's job. For example if an employee had used 10 weeks out of the 18 week entitlement with the previous employer, they can use the remaining 8 weeks with their new employer if they're eligible.
- Parental Leave must be taken in minimum blocks of one week (with the exception of parental leave for a child in receipt of disability living allowance or Personal Independence Payment, whereby leave may be taken in blocks of days rather than weeks).
- All contractual terms and conditions other than pay should continue throughout a period of parental leave.

5. Do I qualify for Unpaid Parental Leave?

Yes, if all of the following apply:

- You are an employee (not self employed or a "worker") with at least one year's continuous service with Worcester City Council.
- You are the parent of a child (named on the Birth Certificate); or you are the adoptive parent of a child (named on the Adoption Certificate); or you have legal "parental responsibility" for a child.
- You will need to provide evidence of the child's date of birth or in the case of an adopted child, the date on which the placement began or is to begin.
- You are not a foster parent (unless you've secured parental responsibility through the courts)
- The child is under 18.
- Where relevant, evidence that a child is entitled to Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

6. How do I give notice to take Unpaid Parental Leave?

- You must give us at least 21 days written notice to take Parental Leave.
- You must discuss with your manager if the request is able to be accommodated (based on operational and/or resourcing need).
- Complete the Council's Unpaid Parental Leave Application Form and forward to your Line Manager and Human Resources.

7. Unpaid Parental Leave following Paternity Leave

If you take Unpaid Parental Leave to follow on from Paternity Leave, you should contact us no later than 21 days before the proposed period of leave is due to begin.

8. What if my Unpaid Parental Leave is postponed?

We can refuse or postpone your application for Parental Leave (other than at the time a child is born or adopted, or it is added to paternity leave) if there is a "significant reason" based on it creating serious operational and/or resourcing needs.

Postponements along with the reason will be given in writing, within 7 days of receiving the request. Alternative dates should be offered although the amount of leave requested cannot be changed. You will be entitled to reschedule any postponed Parental Leave, to begin no later than 6 months after the date on which the original requested leave should have begun.

However, parental leave cannot be postponed so that the leave ends after the child's 18th birthday.

9. Is my pension affected ?

If you take a period of Parental Leave, you will not build up pension benefits. The Council will notify you of the lost amount of Pensionable Pay for the period and you can elect to cover the period of pension "lost" by taking out an Additional Pension Contribution (APC) contract.

Where an APC contract is taken out to cover the pension "lost" during a period of Unpaid Parental Leave, the cost is shared 1/3rd to the employee and 2/3rds to the employer, provided that the member makes an election to buy "lost" pension within 30 days or returning to work.

10. What if I am unhappy with a decision on Unpaid Parental Leave?

If you are dissatisfied with any decision made in respect of Parental Leave rights, you should firstly highlight it to your manager, or speak to Human Resources. You are also able to raise your concern via the Council's formal grievance procedure, which is found on STAFF ROOM.

11. Our other Family Friendly Policies & Procedures

- Paternity Leave and Pay
- Flexible Working
- Adoption Leave and Pay
- Maternity Leave and Pay
- Shared Parental Leave
- Maternity Support Leave and Adoption Support Leave.
- Parental Bereavement Leave