

Elected Members Maternity Policy

Introduction

At Annual Council in May 20022 Members agreed an allowance scheme to include a statement that clarifies the continued right of remuneration for a Member when they are required to take maternity, paternity, shared-parental or adoption leave for up to a period of 12 months, subject to the legal attendance requirements.

1. Leave Periods

1.1 Members giving birth are entitled to up to 6 months maternity leave from the due date, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required.

1.2 In addition, where the birth is premature, the Member is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period. In such cases any leave taken to cover prematurity of 28 days or less shall be deducted from any extension beyond the initial 6 months.

1.3 In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases of prematurity of 29 days or more, additional leave may be taken by agreement, and such exceptional leave shall not be deducted from the total 52-week entitlement.

1.4 Members shall be entitled to take a minimum of 2 weeks paternity leave if they are the biological father or nominated carer of their partner/spouse following the birth of their child(ren).

1.5 A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to advise the Chief Whip of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every reasonable effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave.

1.6 Where both parents are Members leave may be shared up to a maximum of 24 weeks for the first six months and 26 weeks for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.

1.7 A Member who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency shall be entitled to take up to six months adoption leave from the date of placement, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required.

1.8 If a child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, the:

- birth mother can take up to 6 months leave, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required
- birth father can take up to 2 weeks of paternity leave or pay

- partner of the birth mother or adopter can get up to 2 weeks of paternity leave or pay

They will both be entitled to 2 weeks of parental bereavement leave after they finish their maternity or paternity leave.

1.9 Any Member who takes maternity, shared parental or adoption leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six month period.

1.10 Any Member intending to take maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the reasonable notice periods both in terms of the point at which the leave starts and the point at which they return. The Chief Whip should set these notice periods following consultation with Group members and should circulate them to the Group after each AGM.

2. Basic Allowance

2.1 All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance from the Council in full whilst on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.

3. Cover arrangements

3.1 The respective Political Groups shall ensure that that policy is implemented, and that Members are supported to use it.

3.2 Where a Member taking leave (other than paternity leave) is a portfolio-holder, or holds another senior role within the Group, another Member may be appointed or elected to provide cover during the period of absence.

3.3 A Member taking leave shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post which they held before the leave began, or to an alternative post with equivalent status and remuneration. This provision does not apply if the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on leave.

3.4 In all cases it shall be the responsibility of the Parties, in consultation with relevant Ward colleagues of the Member taking leave, to ensure that casework, surgeries and other necessary Ward activities are covered during the period of leave.

3.6 The Chief Whip and Ward colleagues should ensure throughout a leave period that contact is maintained with the Member taking leave and that all reasonable measures are taken to provide support.

3.7 Members taking leave should ensure that they respond to reasonable requests for information as promptly as possible, and that they keep the Party, Council's Monitoring Officer informed and updated in relation to intended dates of return and requests for extension of leave.

4. Resigning from Office and Elections

4.1 If a Member decides to leave office at the end of their maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave they must notify the Chief Whip and the Monitoring Officer at the earliest possible opportunity. Payment of the basic allowance will cease from the effective resignation date.

4.2 If an election is held during the Member's maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.