

Report Title:	<b>Family Leave Policy – additional paid leave for foster carers</b>
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for HR, Legal , ICT, Resident and Leisure Services and Performance Management and Windsor
Meeting and Date:	12 November 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Duncan Sharkey, Managing Director & Nikki Craig, Head of HR, Corporate Projects and ICT
Wards affected:	None

www.rbwm.gov.uk



## REPORT SUMMARY

- The Council has various arrangements for leave for those staff with families or caring responsibilities. This report proposes to enhance the current arrangements by the addition of up to nine days paid leave for foster carers. This enhancement would be added to the current Paternity, Shared Parental and Dependent Care Leave policy, which would be renamed the Family Leave policy. This policy change supports the Council's priority of 'Healthy, skilled and independent residents'.

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Employment Panel notes the report and:

- Approves the addition of paid leave for foster carers to the Council's Family Leave policy.

## 2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Options

**Table 1: Options arising from this report**

Option	Comments
Approve the addition of paid leave for foster carers. <b>This is the recommended option</b>	This new provision enhances the Council's family friendly policies and supports Achieving for Children with their promotion and development of foster care services within the borough.
The addition of paid leave for foster carers is not approved.	

- 2.1 Foster carers make a significant contribution to society and the lives of children in care. Many carers have other employment and like parents need flexibility in their working lives. In addition, they will need time off to deal with issues associated with being a foster carer.
- 2.2 Achieving for Children (AfC), the Council’s partner for the delivery of children’s services in the Borough, has recently introduced a policy to give its own staff, who are foster carers, time off and they approached the Council asking if we would enhance our family friendly policies with the addition of an allowance of paid leave.
- 2.3 Whilst the Council does not currently have any employees who are foster carers, the introduction of this policy is intended to demonstrate our support for AfC in their promotion of foster care services in the Borough and support for employees who are considering becoming a foster carer.
- 2.4 The proposed new provision is:

For employees who are:

- Applying to become foster carers.
- An approved foster carer and have a child in placement.
- An approved kinship\* carer and have three months or more employment service with the Council.

\* A carer who is a family member such as a grandparent.

Additional paid leave in a 12 month period for:

- Assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer - up to three days.
- Attendance at panel for approval - one day.
- Child review meetings, annual foster carer review meeting, settling any child into placement and training - up to five days.

The leave (up to four days) for assessment, initial training and the panel approval would be a one off allowance. Once approved as a foster carer, the foster carer would be entitled to up to five days annually. Requests for time off would be agreed locally in line with individual and service’s needs.

- 2.5 The Council has a policy that covers Paternity, Shared Parental and Dependant Leave. Appendix A contains a section on Foster Care leave that will be added to this policy. The policy will be renamed Family Leave policy.
- 2.6 The model policy for schools will also be updated and schools encouraged to adopt the revised policy.

**3. KEY IMPLICATIONS**

**Table 2: Key Implications**

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
---------	-------	-----	----------	------------------------	------------------

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Unmet</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Exceeded</b>	<b>Significantly Exceeded</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>
Policy updated and publicised to staff by 30 November	Policy not updated and publicised to staff	30 November 2019	n/a	n/a	30 November 2019

#### **4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY**

4.1 There is no immediate financial impact.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 There are no risks identified.

#### **7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

7.1 Equalities: An Equality Impact Assessment has not been done.

7.2 Climate change/sustainability: There are no climate change/sustainability implications

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR: Employee data is processed in accordance with the HR Privacy Statement, which is published on the website.

#### **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 No consultation was undertaken. The Trade Unions were advised of the proposal and were supportive.

#### **9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

9.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

**Table 4: Implementation timetable/**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
14 November 2019	Approval of policy
30 November 2019	Updated policy is published and publicised

## 10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 This report is supported by one appendix:
- Appendix A – Leave for foster carers

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 There are no background documents for this report.

## 12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
Cllr Rayner	Lead Member for HR, Legal, ICT, Resident and Leisure Services and Performance Management	28/10/19	28/10/19
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	29/10/19	
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	29/10/19	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	29/10/19	
Ruth Watkins	Deputy S151 officer	29/10/19	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	29/10/19	
Nikki Craig	Head of HR, Corporate Projects and ICT	25/10/19	25/10/19
Louisa Dean	Communications		
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	29/10/19	30/10/19
Hilary Hall	Director Adults, Commissioning and Health	29/10/19	30/10/19
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance	29/10/19	29/10/19

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To Follow item?</b>
Non-key decision	No	No
Report Author: Karin Zussman-Ward, Lead HR Policy and Reward Advisor, 01628 796211		

## Appendix A

### New section to be added to the Family leave Scheme

#### 14 Foster Carers Leave

- 14.1 This provision applies to employees who:
- Are applying to become foster carers.
  - Are approved foster carers and have a child in placement.
  - Are an approved kinship\* carer and have at least three months service with the Council.
- 14.2 Employees must:
- Have continuous service with the Council of at least one year.
  - Provide evidence of their application to become a foster carer.
  - Provide a notice of acceptance as a foster carer.
  - Provide evidence of any placement.
- 14.3 Paid time off will be:
- For assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer – up to three days
  - Attendance at panel for approval – one day.
  - Child review meetings, annual foster carer review meeting, settling a child into a placement and training – up to five days.
- 14.4 Leave for assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer and attendance at panel for approval would be a one-off allowance. The remaining five days is available over a 12 month period on an annual basis.
- 14.5 Requests for time off should be discussed initially with the Line Manager and then requested in writing. Leave will be approved on a discretionary basis taking into account the individual circumstances and service needs.