

CARING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY – HR POLICY FOR WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

Executive Summary

This report seeks formal authority to approve the Caring for Children and Young People Policy as part of the Council's people management agenda. This is an HR policy for Woking Borough Council employees.

The policy consolidates existing guidance on Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Surrogacy and Unpaid Parental Leave and incorporates Shared Parental Leave.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) **the Council adopts the Caring for Children and Young People Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, with effect from 1 April 2020; and**
- (ii) **the Head of Human Resources, in consultation with Corporate Management Group and Unison, be delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Policy.**

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The Council has a duty to provide information on rights and entitlements when an employee wishes to take leave to care for a child or young person. Incorporating them into one policy document aims to centralise all relevant information to aid ease of access and understanding.

The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Ray Morgan, Chief Executive
Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333

Contact Person: Amanda Jeffrey, Head of Human Resources
Email: amanda.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3904

**Caring for Children and Young People Policy – HR Policy for Woking Borough Council
Employees**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Bittleston
Email: cllr david.bittleston@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ann-Marie Barker
Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk

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Caring for Children and Young People Policy – HR Policy for Woking Borough Council Employees

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to provide detailed advice and guidance for employees with caring responsibilities for Children and Young People.
- 1.2 This HR policy for Woking Borough Council employees consolidates existing guidance on Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Surrogacy and Unpaid Parental Leave and incorporates information on Shared Parental Leave.
- 1.3 Guidance on the leave types above is all currently documented on separate pages on the Council's intranet. This new policy brings all relevant information into one reference document.
- 1.4 A review of the Council's existing entitlements and guidance has taken place and some minor amendments agreed.
- 1.5 The Caring for Children and Young People Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 Introduction of Shared Parental Leave and Pay

- 2.1 The policy contains new guidance in regards to Shared Parental Leave. This is a legal entitlement for parents to share up to a maximum of 50 weeks leave during the first year of the child's life/placement. It aims to provide parents and carers with more flexibility over how they share childcare.
- 2.2 An entitlement to Occupational Shared Parental Pay has been introduced (12 weeks half pay). The rules and amounts mirror the existing arrangements for Occupational Maternity and Adoption pay.

3.0 Revision to occupational maternity pay

- 3.1 Employees taking Maternity or Adoption leave will now receive their full pay amount for the first two weeks. By law, females have to take the first 2 weeks of maternity leave following the birth of a child. Previously this was paid at the statutory rate; 90% of their average weekly earnings. Paternity Leave for partners (2 weeks) is enhanced by the Council so that the employee receives their full pay during this time. This change ensures the first 2 weeks enhancement is consistent across all types of leave, regardless of gender.

4.0 Revision to continuous service requirements

- 4.1 An amendment has been made to the service requirements for occupational payments.
- 4.2 Previously, if an employee had 6 months continuous service with Woking Borough Council 15 weeks before the baby was due to be born/matched, they were entitled to receive Occupational Paternity Pay – detailed in paragraph 3.1.
- 4.3 Whereas one years' service with Woking Borough Council was required 15 weeks before the baby was due to born/matched for an employee to receive Occupational Maternity and Adoption pay (12 weeks half pay).
- 4.4 Therefore to ensure parity across all leave types, the service requirements have been amended so that all occupational payments require one years' service 15 weeks before the baby is due/they are matched with a child. This allows equal access to these payments for all employees.

5.0 Implications

Financial

- 5.1 There will be a financial implication to the slight increase to occupational payments.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 5.2 The new policy and its amendments will be published and promoted to all employees.
- 5.3 The Human Resources Team provide one to one discussions for any employees intending to take any of the leave types to ensure that rights and entitlements are fully explained.

Community Safety

- 5.4 None.

Risk Management

- 5.5 The policy outlines the risk assessment required for pregnant employees.

Sustainability

- 5.6 A Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed.

Equalities

- 5.7 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

Safeguarding

- 5.8 None.

6.0 Consultations

- 6.1 Corporate Management Group reviewed the draft policy and discussed and agreed the amendments on 6 January 2020.
- 6.2 Representatives from Unison were consulted and fully supported all the amendments and were content with the draft policy.

REPORT ENDS