



**Doncaster
Council**

DRAFT PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR COUNCILLORS

Introduction

The objective of the policy is to ensure that insofar as possible Members (and both parents) are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for those in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) during any period of leave.

Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority Councillors. It will also assist with retaining experienced Councillors – particularly women – and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded.

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 Where the birth is premature, leave will commence on the actual birth date. The period between the date of birth and the due date can be taken in addition to the 6 month's period.
- 1.3 Members shall be entitled to take 2 weeks paternity leave if they are the biological father or nominated carer of their partner/spouse following the birth of their child(ren).
- 1.4 A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to inform the Monitoring Officer of these at the earliest possible opportunity. The Council will endeavour to replicate these arrangements where possible.
- 1.5 Where both parents are Members, leave may be shared up to a maximum of 26 weeks for the first six months and 26 weeks for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 52 weeks.

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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 6 month period unless an extended leave of absence is agreed by the Monitoring Officer prior to the expiration of that six month period.
- 1.8 Any Member intending to take maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant notice requirements of the Council, both in terms of the point at which the leave starts and the point at which they return.
- 1.9 Any member taking leave should ensure that they respond to reasonable requests for information as promptly as possible, and that they keep the Monitoring Officer and their respective Groups (if applicable) informed and updated in relation to intended dates of return and requests for extension of leave.

2. Basic Allowance

- 2.1 All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.1 Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.
- 3.2 A replacement may be appointed to cover the period of absence and that Councillor shall also receive an SRA for the period of the temporary appointment. The ordinary rules preventing the payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowance shall apply.
- 3.3 The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances under this policy, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, shall continue for a period of up to six months, or until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, (whichever is the earlier). At such a point, the position will be

reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further six month period. When the primary SRA holder returns to duties the additional SRA paid to a replacement Member will cease.

- 3.4 Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on leave, or their post is changed as a result of the Mayor making changes to the composition of Cabinet, they shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post

4. Resigning from Office and Elections

- 4.1 If a Member decides not to return to their post at the end of their maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave they must notify the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.
- 4.2 If an election is held during the Member's leave period and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

5. Notice Periods

- 5.1 The Councillor must notify the Monitoring Officer by email no later than 8 weeks before the expected week of childbirth (maternity/ paternity), intended shared parental or adoption leave or as soon as is reasonably practicable and provide:
- (i) the week the baby/ child (in the case of adoption leave - date of placement) is due;
 - (ii) the period of leave the Councillor intends to take; and
 - (iii) when they want their leave to start.
- 5.2 This will be acknowledged within 2 weeks. Where applicable Members are also requested to notify their Groups
- 5.3 If a Councillor wishes to return from leave earlier than originally planned, they should notify the Monitoring Officer by email (as above), who will provide confirmation that the information has been received and from what date they will resume the responsibilities of any remunerated post.
- 5.4 If a Councillor taking leave wishes to extend this beyond 6-months (as set out in this Policy), then no later than 4 weeks before the end of the 6-month period, the Councillor should notify the Monitoring Officer in writing.

6. Additional Support

- 6.1 Following notification of intended leave the Member requesting Parental Leave will be contacted by the Governance and Member Services Manager to discuss any additional arrangements or support requirements e.g. arrangements for keeping in touch or updated on Council business.
- 6.2 The relevant political groups and the Council will in so far as able, facilitate any arrangements made by relevant Councillors which allow for the case work of a Councillor on Parental Leave to be completed by another Ward Councillor, or another Councillor if that is not feasible.