THE MORAY COUNCIL

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

* 1. Introduction

This document sets out the Council’s policy on Parental Leave. Parental leave is a right to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child’s welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.

1. **Scope**

All the benefits of Parental Leave referred to in this document apply to all full-time and part-time employees who meet the eligibility requirements defined in Section 3.0 below.

**3.0 Policy Statement**

The Council extends entitlement of parental leave to all its employees who have one year or more continuous service and where the employee:

* is named on the child’s birth or adoption certificate
* does have, or is expected to have, parental responsibility for a child

and

* where the child is aged under 18 years of age

The parents of a child do not have to be living with the child in order to qualify for parental leave.

1. **Purpose of leave**

4.1 Parental leave must be to care for a child. This means looking after the welfare of a child and can include making arrangements for the good of a child. Examples of the way leave might be used include:

* to spend more time with a child in the early years;
* to accompany a child during a stay in hospital;
* checking out new schools;
* settling a child into childcare arrangements.

Parental leave is intended to help employees balance their work and family commitments. Some other purpose could be construed as misconduct and would be viewed very seriously.

**5.0 Leave provisions**

Date of Review: April 2015

Policy Approved: October 2011

Version Effective From: April 2015

Next review Date: April 2018

5.1 A total of 18 weeks leave may be taken for each of the employee's children under 18 years of age. One week’s parental leave is equal to the time that an employee is normally required to work in a week.

5.2 An employee can take parental leave in blocks of one week or more, up to a maximum of 18 weeks for each child. Up to 4 weeks’ parental leave can be taken in any calendar year. Parents of a child who has been awarded disability living allowance can take the leave in days or shorter periods than a week.

5.3 Both parents have a separate entitlement (i.e. 18 weeks for each parent).

5.4 Employees may take parental leave up to the child’s 18th birthday.

5.5 Employees are entitled to return to their job following a period of parental leave.

**6.0 Pay during leave**

6.1 Parental leave is granted without pay.

6.2 Employees wishing to pay contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme, in respect of the unpaid parental leave, should elect to do so within 30 days of returning to work in order to share the contribution costs with the Moray Council.  If the employee elects to contribute after the 30 day return to work period they will be responsible for 100% of the required contribution costs.  If no contributions are paid the period of leave will be treated as a break in membership. Employees wishing to elect to pay the contributions should contact the Pensions Section on either 01224 264264 or at pensions@nespf.org.uk

6.3 An employee’s entitlement to paid annual leave is not affected by a period of parental leave.

**7.0 Requesting/ granting of leave**

7.1 Employees must give their manager a minimum of 21 days’ notice of their intention to take leave. Applications should be submitted on the ***application for parental leave* form.**

7.2 An employee who wishes to apply for parental leave must provide details of

* The fact that he/she has responsibility for the child
* The child’s date of birth/adoption
* The child’s entitlement to disability living allowance, where appropriate
* The reasons for the application for parental leave

7.3 The employing department may, in exceptional circumstances, postpone the parental leave for up to six months, e.g. where services may be unduly disrupted or where a significant proportion of the workforce applies for parental leave at the same time. Parental leave cannot be postponed when the employee gives notice to take it immediately after the time the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

7.4 The employing department must respond to the employee’s request for parental leave within 7 days.

**8.0 Associated Documents**

Readers are also referred to the following **Family Friendly** policies and procedures:

* Flexible Working Hours
* Job Sharing Scheme
* Homeworking
* Guidance on Maternity Leave and Pay
* Shared Parental Leave
* Special Leave Provisions:

- Bereavement
- Family Illness
- Maternity Support
- Adoption
- Other Reasons