

PARENTAL LEAVE

Introduction and Purpose of Leave

The Council recognises that family care responsibilities impact on the lives of a large number of employees. It encourages employees to take parental leave to try to achieve a balanced approach between family and working life.

Parental leave is planned time off work to look after your child or to make arrangements for your child's welfare. You can use it to spend quality time with your child. A child refers to a birth or adopted child and these provisions apply equally to both, unless stated otherwise.

Parental leave should not usually be used for emergency situations, when your child is ill suddenly or is injured, when your childcare arrangements break down or if there is an immediate problem at school. In these cases, you should use the [Carer Leave Provisions](#).

These provisions meet the requirements of the Maternity & Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999 (effective from 15 December 1999), the Parental Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2001 and the Parental Leave (EU Directive) Regulations 2013.

These provisions should provide you with adequate short and longer term solutions to taking parental leave, allowing you time away from work to spend with your child. They aim to encourage managers and employees to openly discuss their needs for parental leave in a mutually acceptable manner.

Scope of Provisions

These provisions apply to all permanent and fixed term Council employees. Part-time workers and job sharers are entitled to parental leave on a pro-rated basis.

All employees must have completed one year's continuous service with Perth & Kinross Council by the date they want to take parental leave.

These provisions apply to male and female employees who have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child they are requesting leave for. This covers mothers and fathers of children, anyone who has acquired parental responsibility through court, or by agreement, and adoptive parents.

Parental Leave Provisions

From 8 March 2013 parental leave is a total of 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, born or adopted, on or after 15 December 1994. If your child is disabled, you are entitled to a total of 26 weeks' unpaid leave. Any parental leave taken with a previous or other employer since 15 December 1999 will count towards the 18 weeks' entitlement.

The leave can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday.

If your child is disabled then the leave can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday. If your child is adopted, the leave can be taken up to the 18th anniversary of the date of the adoption placement, or until the child's 18th birthday, whichever is sooner.

You will be required to provide specific evidence relating to each child for whom you request parental leave. This will be evidence of your parental responsibility, or expected responsibility, for the child; the child's date of birth, or the date of adoption placement; and, if applicable, that your child is disabled.

The Council reserves the right to contact your previous or other employer(s) to verify parental leave already taken since 15 December 1999.

Leave of Absence

You are encouraged to discuss with your Line Manager the most effective way of taking parental leave to suit both your own needs and those of the Service. Every effort will be made to enable you to take parental leave, at the dates you have chosen.

However, Line Managers must consider all requests for leave, in the context of operational requirements. As a result, there may be instances where your Line Manager may have to limit the period of parental leave that can be taken at a specific time or even postpone the leave.

The following arrangements for time off can be considered:

(a) Temporary Amendment to Working Pattern

You can request a change in either your pattern of weekly hours or a reduction in hours worked, for example, part-time working, four-day weeks, term time working or reduced hours during school holidays. Any reduced-hours working would be for a specific period of time with the requirement to revert to your original contract, unless a permanent change is agreed with your Line Manager.

(b) Unpaid Leave in Days

You can request parental leave in a single day, or days, or as part of an agreed amendment to your working pattern as outlined in a). For part-time workers, parental leave may be administered in hours.

(c) Unpaid Leave in Blocks of One Week or More

You can request blocks of parental leave, up to a maximum of 4 weeks' leave at any one time. In special circumstances, consideration will be given to granting longer blocks of leave.

(d) Adding Parental Leave to Other Types of Leave

You can request that unpaid parental leave is added on to a period of annual leave, flexi-leave, maternity leave, maternity support leave, adoption leave, and carer and compassionate leave.

Applying For Leave/Notice Requirements

All requests for parental leave should be made on the [Application for Parental Leave form](#), available on eric or from Human Resources and submitted to your Line Manager, for approval by the appropriate Head of Service.

If you are requesting parental leave of ***less than one week***, you should give your Line Manager notice of twice the length of leave you are requesting. For example, if you want 2 days' parental leave, you should give 4 days' notice before the date you wish your parental leave to start.

If you are requesting parental leave of ***one week or more***, you should give your Line Manager 21 days' notice before the date you wish your parental leave to start. For longer blocks of leave, you should give as much notice as possible to assist Line Managers to plan for your absence.

The notice requirements outlined above also apply to an employee who adds parental leave on to another period of leave. For example, an employee on 2 weeks' annual leave who wishes to add 2 days' parental leave to their annual leave must give 4 days' notice before returning to work.

If you want to take parental leave ***following the birth or adoption placement*** of your child, you must give your Line Manager 21 days' notice before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or expected week of adoption placement. If the child is born, or the adoption placement takes place, earlier or later than expected, a degree of flexibility will be shown, subject to reasonable notice and the Line Manager's assessment of the operational requirements.

Postponing Parental Leave

Where it has been necessary to postpone parental leave for operational reasons, you will be notified in writing within 7 days of the request for parental leave (where time allows this) of the reasons why your request has been postponed and of alternative dates to take the leave. You will be offered alternative dates, as close as possible to the original dates you requested. In all events, you will be given alternative dates within the 6 month period, from the first date you requested parental leave to start.

Other Conditions

Pension Contributions

Please note that Local Government Pension Scheme payments will not be made if you are on a period of authorised unpaid leave. If you are in the 50/50 section of the LGPS and you go onto authorised unpaid leave, you will be placed in the main section of the LGPS from the beginning of the next pay period.

If your authorised unpaid leave lasts less than 31 days, your member contributions will be deducted as normal from your salary in that calendar month and the relevant employer's contributions will be paid. There is no need for you to complete any paperwork.

If your authorised unpaid leave lasts more than 30 days, you have the option to buy back any lost pension when you return to work. You must submit a signed [Election form](#) and send it to Employment & Payroll Services in Human Resources. If you complete this process within 30 calendar days of your 'return to work' date, Perth & Kinross Council will contribute to the cost of missed pension contributions, with the split being 1/3rd employee, 2/3rd employer. Your 'return to work' date for this purpose is the first working day after the period of unpaid leave so it is important that you act early to benefit from the cost sharing provision. To start this process, please read the [guidance notes](#) and send the completed [Additional Pension Contribution form](#) to Employment & Payroll Services.

It is possible to complete this process outwith the 30-calendar day period, however no contribution will be made by Perth & Kinross Council, resulting in you being liable for the full amount.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue during parental leave. This can be taken at a mutually convenient time agreed with your Line Manager. You will not be entitled to any days in lieu of public holidays, which fall during a period of parental leave.

Sickness Absence During Parental Leave

If you fall sick during a period of parental leave, you must comply with the reporting procedure and notify your Line Manager on the first day of your sickness (or the next available working day) and submit a doctor's statement to your Line Manager by the earliest practicable date. A period of sickness will be regarded as sick leave from the date of the doctor's statement.