

# OUR POLICY ON TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

## What's this policy about?

We recognise that there may be times when the unexpected happens and you need to act quickly to help or care for a dependant in a crisis. This policy explains how you can access an immediate, short and reasonable amount of unpaid time off to do this, and in what circumstances.

We also have our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy which sets out our separate and specific commitments to supporting bereaved parents.

## Is this policy part of my contract of employment?

No, and we can change this policy at any time, but if any changes are made, we'll always make you aware of them. We may also vary things like time limits in this policy, if we feel we need to.

## Who's covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all employees. It doesn't apply to workers, agency workers, consultants or contractors.

## Who's responsible for this policy?

While we ask all managers to take responsibility for making sure this policy is complied with, its successful operation also depends on you. Please take the time to read and understand it, and to go back to your manager with any questions you may have. We also ask you to support colleagues faced with this type of unexpected situation, to ensure the success of this policy.

## Your right to reasonable unpaid time off

You have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when it's necessary to:

- help when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted,
- make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who becomes ill or is injured,
- take action needed because of the death of a dependant,
- deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant, and/or

- deal with an unexpected incident involving your child when in the care of their school or another place of education which is responsible for them.

## Who counts as a dependant?

A dependant, for the purposes of this policy, means:

- your spouse, civil partner, parent or child,
- a person who lives in the same household as you but not if they're your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee, or
- anyone else who reasonably relies on you to help them, whether to make arrangements for them or take other action for them of the kind referred to above.

## Are there restrictions on when this policy applies?

Yes, there are a couple.

- **An immediate crisis:** this policy only applies if there is an immediate crisis that needs you to provide personal care for a dependant. It won't apply if you know about the situation in advance and can plan for it and book time off to care for them, or where longer-term care is needed. In those situations, please ask your manager for advice on what to do.
- **Necessary for you to act:** this policy only applies where it's necessary for you to take the action in relation to your dependant. This will depend on the nature of the problem, how close you are to them and whether someone else can help instead. And it's unlikely to be considered necessary if you knew in advance that a problem might arise, but didn't try to make alternative arrangements for your dependant's care.

## What amounts to reasonable time off?

We wouldn't normally expect this to be more than one or two days off. However, we'll always look at your particular set of circumstances when assessing what a reasonable time might be.

## What do I need to do to get this time off?

If you're faced with a crisis and find yourself needing to use this policy, it will only work if you tell your manager, as soon as you can, the reason you're taking time off and how long you think you'll be away from work.

This is really important as, if you don't give us this information, we may have to treat it as unauthorised time off, and that means you might be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

We may also ask you to provide us with some evidence of your reason for taking time off, whether in advance of the time off or when you return to work. Anyone suspected of abusing this policy may also be subject to disciplinary action.

## And that's it... for now

We understand that things change, so we'll continue to review the effectiveness of this policy and make sure it's achieving its objectives.

