Policy statement

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to ensuring that all family friendly benefits are applied fairly and consistently. This policy outlines the framework for managing family friendly leave absences and the steps that managers and employees must take to ensure that the employee’s statutory and occupational benefits are applied appropriately.

Scope

All employees of the OPCC

How to use this document

This document is not part of the formal policy. Instead it provides additional information to help you in the practical day to day application of the policy.

It is expected that you will have an understanding of the Other Family Friendly Leave Policy prior to using this guide.

Working Days - where reference is made to working days, these are defined as Monday to Friday, excluding weekends, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays. This is consistently applied irrespective of an individual employee’s work pattern.
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As the manager you are responsible for:

- applying the Other Family Friendly Leave Policy accurately
- assessment of the employee’s eligibility for parental leave and/or maternity support leave related benefits
- maintaining regular contact with parties during the process
- arranging meetings as necessary
- considering flexible working requests and deciding whether to implement where reasonable
- all SAP input relating to the parental and/or maternity support leave absence and pay
- keeping records, drafting and issuing letters / documentation with HR support as necessary
- monitoring your staffing budget to ensure payments during the family friendly leave are in line with planned expectations and notifying their appropriate Finance support and IBC of any discrepancies
- managing any overpayment recovery process, if applicable
- reminding employees that a strict 30 day time limit applies if they wish to buy back lost LGPS pension following unpaid family friendly leave.

All employees are responsible for:

- complying with the Other Family Friendly Leave Policy
- conducting themselves in an acceptable manner
- notifying their manager in good time of their intentions regarding their family friendly leave
- monitoring their monthly payslips to ensure payments during leave are in line with planned expectations and notifying their line manager of any discrepancies

The IBC person who is supporting the manager is responsible for:

- advising on policy application

The OPCC work colleague or trade union representative is responsible for:

- supporting their member/colleague
- attending arranged meetings or ensuring meetings are covered and not delayed

They may make representations, submit papers, ask questions and address a meeting on behalf of the employee. They may not answer questions on behalf of the employee.
Policy stages

There are four main stages to this policy:

- notification of leave
- starting leave
- during leave
- returning to work

The actual steps in the policy may vary dependent on the employee and employer needs.

Stage 1 - Employee says they want to take family friendly leave

Informal discussion

You must meet with the employee on a one-to-one basis as soon as possible to hold an informal discussion regarding their intentions about family friendly leave.

The employee has no statutory right to be accompanied at the discussion. However, a request to be accompanied by an OPCC work colleague or trade union representative may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

You may need to arrange more than one informal discussion.

How to run an informal discussion

You must:

- ask the employee to detail their intentions regarding their family friendly leave
- you must review the employee’s annual leave entitlements and ensure that accrued annual leave is properly planned around their planned family friendly leave. You must refer to the annual leave policy
- you must establish with the employee what reasonable contact will be in place during their family friendly leave

Formal notification

You must ensure that the employee completes and submits the appropriate internal notification forms at the earliest opportunity.

In case of maternity support leave, the employee must give you a completed MSL1 form.

In cases of parental leave, the employee must give you a completed PL1 form.

You must then update the employee’s absence record in SAP.
Agreeing reasonable contact during parental leave

Prior to the employee starting their family friendly leave you must arrange the contact arrangements that will be in place during their leave.

Contact arrangements should take into consideration the employee’s right to a private and family life, whilst at the same time, keeping the employee up to date with vacancies, any significant workplace developments and training opportunities to help the employee settle back into their job when they return to work.

You may therefore wish to agree sending the employee newsletters, service information, minutes of relevant meetings and invitations to staff briefings or meetings.

You may also wish to agree with the employee dates and times of informal one to one meetings or telephone conversations.

Employees are, in turn, encouraged to maintain contact with you to let you know how they are and to discuss any changes that affect their leave or their intention to return to work.

You will therefore need to confirm the agreed method of communication, be it face to face, a contact telephone number, email address or postal address.

Stage 2 - Employee starts their family friendly leave

Monitoring parental leave payments

During the parental leave period(s), you must ensure you review your monthly staffing budget reports to monitor payments being made to the absent employee are consistent with the policy principles.

Queries you are unable to resolve on your own or with your Finance support should be referred to the IBC in the first instance.

If the employee is in receipt of childcare vouchers through the salary sacrifice scheme, the cost of the vouchers will be charged to your budget when there are insufficient occupational payments being paid to the employee to cover the cost. Refer to the salary sacrifice policy and how to guide for more information.
Employees must also ensure they review their monthly payslips to monitor payments are being made consistently with the policy principles.

You should encourage the employee to access their payslips via the Individual Self Service portal, if they have not already signed up.

Employee queries should be referred to you in the first instance and only referred to the Integrated Business Centre if you have been unable to identify or resolve the.

Stage 3 – During family friendly leave

**Reasonable contact**

The contact arrangements agreed prior to the start of family friendly leave should be followed by both the employer and employee.

You should keep a record of any key discussion or action points that arise through this contact, especially if they relate to the employee’s on-going leave/pay or their return to work.

It may be helpful that any points that require follow up by yourself are recorded in writing back to the employee.

If you are unable to establish contact with the employee through the agreed methods of communication you must record each of your attempts to contact them.

You must continue to be considerate of the employee’s right to a private and family life, but if after the third attempt you have still be unable to contact them informally, you should write to the employee expressing concern that you’ve been unable to maintain the agreed contact arrangements and asking them to contact you by a specified date.

**Sickness during family friendly leave**

If the employee is ill while they are absent on maternity support or parental leave, they are not entitled to statutory or occupational sick pay, even if they are in an unpaid period of leave.

The employee will need to decide whether the family friendly or sick pay scheme will be of most benefit to them.

If they wish to access the statutory and occupational sick pay schemes, they will need to ‘return’ from their family friendly leave.
and start sickness absence.

If they wish to do this, you will need to update the employee’s SAP record.

Once the employee has ‘returned’ to work, you must manage their sickness absence under the managing sickness absence policy.

**Stage 4 – Employee says they want to return to work**

Being such relatively short periods of leave, the employee’s return to work date should be known and agreed prior to them starting their family friendly leave.

There is no need for the employee to provide further notification of their intention to return to work and you can assume that they will return to work the next working day after their family friendly leave is due to end.

**Employee requests to work on a flexible basis**

There is no statutory right to return to work on a flexible basis, but there is a statutory obligation on you to consider all requests to return to work on a flexible basis.

All requests to work on a flexible basis (e.g. different working pattern, different hours per week etc.) must be considered under the Managing Requests for Flexible Working Policy.

**Annual Leave**

You must ensure that any unused/carried forward annual leave is used up at the earliest available opportunity.

You must refer to the annual leave policy.

**Monitoring parental leave payments**

During the parental leave period(s), you will have been reviewing your monthly staffing budget reports to monitor payments being made to the absent employee are consistent with the policy principles.

When the parental leave ends, you should expect to see the employee’s full salary costs return to your staffing budget reports.

If you do not see the costs return to your budget when expected you must inform the Integrated Business Centre as soon as possible.
Managers:
Any further queries can be directed to HR Operations.

A confidential Employee Support service is available on freephone 0800 030 5182 (or 0161 836 9498 if calling from a mobile) at any time. Further information is available at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/employee-support

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