



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

Parental Leave Scheme

Date: June 2013

Quick Reference - Associated Documents and Version Control

Title	Parental Leave Scheme
Version	MT approved, 3 rd May 2013
Driver	Conditions of Service and legal entitlement.
Supersedes Version	No previous version (see driver for change)
Driver for change	The Scheme provides clarity of entitlement and process to be followed. 8 March 2013 Entitlement increase from 13 to 18 weeks as per legislative change.
Review Date	This policy will be updated to incorporate any relevant change to legislation or best practice as required.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Parental leave is a legal entitlement that allows employees (both mothers and fathers), who have at least one year's continuous service, to take a period of unpaid leave to care for each child born or adopted.
- 1.2 Employees can have up to 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child. The minimum period of leave that may be taken is 1 week, and the maximum that can be taken in any year is 4 weeks. The year will run from the date that the employee became entitled to the leave i.e. the child's date of birth.
- 1.3 Eligible employees can choose to take parental leave at any time, as follows:
 - Up until the child's 14th birthday (this is enhanced by the Joint Board from statutory age of 5).
 - In cases of adoption, the entitlement runs until the 14th anniversary of when the child is first placed with the family.
- 1.4 In the case of a child with a disability parental leave can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday.

2.0 REQUESTING LEAVE

- 2.1 For parental leave, a minimum of 3 weeks notice is legally required. Parental leave is not generally intended for unexpected situations but normally to enable you to spend time with your child for a specific reason.
- 2.2 Parental leave is a legal entitlement, and should normally be granted. However where services would be unduly disrupted if leave were taken during the period identified the leave may be postponed (not rejected). It may therefore be beneficial to provide more than the minimum 3 weeks notice period where possible.
- 2.3 If the parental leave request is postponed, the employee must be consulted and a date fixed by the Manager for the employee to take the leave within 6 months from the employee's original intended start date for leave.
- 2.4 Reasonable grounds where parental leave may be postponed include:
 - The period of leave applied for is at a seasonal peak
 - A significant proportion of the workforce has applied for parental leave at the same time
 - The employee's role is such that absence at a particular time would unduly harm service delivery

- 2.5 The reason for the postponement and the new dates must be confirmed in writing to the employee within 7 days of the employee's original request (see further information below).
- 2.6 Leave cannot be postponed where the request for leave is immediately after the birth or adoption of a child. However, employees must still give the required 3 weeks' notice.
- 2.7 Employees must provide evidence that confirms their entitlement to parental leave, and such evidence will depend on how the parental responsibility arises, i.e. birth or adoption of a child. A child would be classed as disabled when in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), or when confirmed as such by a GP. The evidence is only required to be provided when making the first request for parental leave.
- 2.8 Leave should be requested using the standard Parental Leave Request Form (See Further Information, below) which should be completed by the employee and passed to the Manager for signing.

3.0 LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

- 3.1 Up to 18 weeks unpaid leave is available to all parents who have completed at least one year's continuous service. Parents of disabled children are entitled to 18 weeks parental leave up to the child's 18th birthday.
- 3.2 The minimum period of leave is 1 week, and the maximum that can be taken in any year (per individual child) is 4 weeks. If a period of less than 1 week is requested it will still be regarded as a full week for the purposes of calculating the total parental leave allowance. (The unpaid leave would only be calculated on actual days taken).
- 3.3 If the child is disabled there is a legal entitlement to take the time off in days rather than weeks.
- 3.4 The Manager approving the leave should ensure that the Parental Leave Record Form is updated and retained for information. The Manager must send a copy of the signed Parental Leave Request Form to West Dunbartonshire Council's HR Connect who will ensure the WMS is updated and pay is adjusted accordingly.

4.0 CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

- 4.1 Parental leave does not affect continuity service for redundancy or employment rights purposes.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 Parental leave previously taken with another employer still counts towards the entitlement. An employee is responsible for ensuring that the Manager is aware of any previous parental leave.

6.0 PENSION CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 If you are granted unpaid leave of absence for parental leave full local government pension scheme membership continues to build up during the period, but you must pay the pension contributions that would have been paid had you been at work. You should complete and return Form S.4 as soon as possible. You can also seek further information from the Strathclyde Pension Fund Office on this matter.

Further Information:

For the purposes of this Scheme, the Valuation Joint Board has adopted the charts and forms used by West Dunbartonshire Council. There are available on the HR&OD Knowledge portal of the WDC Intranet (See <http://newintranet.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/hr-od/parental-leave/>)

- Parental Leave Flowchart
- Parental Leave Request Form
- Parental Leave Record
- Template Letter (confirming leave request)
- S.4 Form

7.0 REVIEW

- 7.1 This scheme will be updated to incorporate any relevant change to legislation or best practice as required.