

Fostering Leave Policy



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Herefordshire Council recognises that employees who are foster carers are providing a valuable service to the community and the council.
- 1.2 The council is committed to becoming a Fostering Friendly employer through supporting our employees who are prospective or existing foster carers. We recognise that by having the support of the council may make the difference when an employee is making the vital decision to become a foster carer.
- 1.3 The council also encourage partners and other organisations to adopt this approach.

2. Background

- 2.1 To address national challenges around fostering and to try and encourage more people to become foster carers, the Government has called for employers to become 'foster friendly'
- 2.2 As part of the national push to recruit more foster carers has been to 'bust the myth' that you are not allowed to work if you are a foster carer.

3. Aim

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to support those employees in Herefordshire Council who are already foster carers and to encourage those who may be considering foster care to take that step as by doing so will be providing positive working role models and widening the pool of available foster carers. This way, more children in care can be matched with the best foster carer for them.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all employees of the council, including those on temporary or fixed term contracts. This policy does not apply to agency or contractors.
- 4.2 This policy is aligned with the Equalities Act 2010 and ensures that all protected characteristics are fully addressed. These include, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignments, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, disability, race and religion/beliefs.

5. Leave entitlement

- 5.1 Any employee who is applying to become an approved foster carer may be granted up to 5 days leave with pay per leave year (pro rata for part time employees) to attend any meetings, home visits or mandatory training as part of the preparation and assessment process. These days can be taken as half days as appropriate.

5.2 Any employee who is already an approved foster carer may be granted up to 5 days leave with pay each leave year (pro rata for part time employees) to attend any meetings, training or to respond to the needs of a child. These days can be taken as half days as appropriate.

5.3 Leave requests will need to be submitted through business world, recorded as special leave (paid). Staff utilising this leave should ensure that their managers are kept informed and work updated.

6. Flexibility

6.1 Managers should adopt a flexible and accommodating approach to requests for time off, leave and flexible working arrangements from foster carers and prospective foster carers in relation to the care of a looked after child or during their journey to becoming a foster carer. Managers should also understand that these requests may be at short notice.

7. Support

7.1 There is internal support available for staff through our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) offering a confidential support advice line that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues.

7.2 Our [fostering service](#) also offer advice, training, policies and other information to support foster carers in their roles.

8. Document classification & version log

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