



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
6 January 2022

ITEM 06

Report sponsor: Simon Riley, Strategic Director
of Corporate Resources
Report author: Jas Bhupal, HR Advisor, Policy
and Strategy

Foster Carer Leave Policy

Purpose

- 1.1 The Foster Carer Leave Policy has been updated to reflect the Council's approach to colleagues taking Foster Carer Leave.
- 1.2 The policy clearly defines for managers and colleagues the purpose and principles of the Council's approach to Foster Carer Leave.
- 1.3 The policy sets out the time off that we will offer prospective and existing foster carers.
- 1.4 Approving the revised policy will enable the Council to gain Fostering Friendly Status. Fostering Friendly is a programme which is run by the Fostering Network, which is a national organisation. It has been created to encourage employers to support and recognise the roles Foster Carers play in the lives of children.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the revised Foster Carer Leave Policy.
- 2.2 To note that subject to Personnel Committee approval, the policy will proceed to CJC for ratification.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 The policy has been updated to ensure that it accurately reflects the Council's approach to colleagues taking foster carer leave.
- 3.2 To enable the Council to gain Fostering Friendly Status.
- 3.3 To help support and encourage more of our colleagues to become foster carers.

Supporting information

- 4.1 Derby City Council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care. We understand that foster carers who do other work in addition to fostering need some flexibility in their working arrangements in order to meet the needs of their fostered child. In recognition of this valuable contribution, foster carer leave is available for those colleagues that foster children.

Proposed changes to the Policy

- 4.2 The proposed changes to the Foster Carer Leave Policy are:
- Foster carer leave will now be available for those colleagues that foster children or are going through the assessment process to foster children, either for Derby City Council Fostering service, other Local Authorities or Independent Fostering Agencies (previously colleagues could only apply if they were fostering for Derby City Council).
 - Foster carer leave will apply to family and friends carers.
 - Special Guardians will be eligible for the assessment leave entitlement (4 days)
 - Foster carer leave will increase from 3 working days paid leave a year to:
 - 4 working days paid leave for the assessment, initial training and attendance at the fostering panel prior to approval as a foster carer. This is a one-off entitlement.
 - 5 working days paid leave in any rolling twelve -month period if the fostering placement requires this. This is the ongoing foster carer leave for approved foster carers.
 - This entitlement is pro rata for part-time colleagues.
 - Colleagues will need to request leave from their manager who will consider requests based on service requirements.

Fostering Friendly Status

- 4.3 The benefits to employers with Fostering Friendly status are:
- We can display the Fostering Friendly logo on our website and fostering material
 - The Fostering Network publish a list of Fostering Friendly employers which can help to promote and celebrate the new status
 - By becoming Fostering Friendly we can improve support for our DCC colleagues, making it easier for people to consider fostering.

- 4.4 To obtain the Fostering Friendly Status, the Fostering Network has a list of recommendations that the HR policy should cover:
- It applies to all employees who are foster carers
 - Foster Carers in employment with your organisation are entitled to an additional minimum of five days paid leave per annum to allow for the process of becoming a foster carer, settling in a new child, training courses, support groups, meetings, and emergencies
 - You must promote Foster Care Fortnight™ during our annual campaign (this recommendation we already support).
- 4.5 Once DCC has achieved the Fostering Friendly Status we could encourage other local businesses to think about becoming Fostering Friendly. Cumbria County Council's website promotes becoming Fostering Friendly and have a list of companies who have signed up to the initiative.
- 4.6 We are part of the D2N2 Collaborative Board looking at ways we can collectively work together on Fostering. One of the listed projects is to obtain Fostering Friendly Status. Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Derbyshire County Council, and ourselves are all updating our HR policies to become Fostering Friendly. Once all four have Fostering Friendly Status there will be a joint marketing campaign to promote this.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 The policy has been developed in consultation with the Principal Service Manager of the Fostering Service.
- 5.2 The proposals for the revised policy were agreed at People's DMT.
- 5.3 The revised draft Foster Carer Leave Policy has been shared with the HR Management team, Legal and the Strategic Director of People Services.
- 5.4 Consultation has also taken place with Trade Union colleagues through the Policy Working Group.
- 5.5 The LGBTQ+ Network and the Lead on Equalities and Diversity were consulted on the draft Policy.

Other options

- 6.1 To continue with the Foster Carer Leave Policy in its current form. This option is not recommended as the Council would not gain Fostering Friendly Status.

Financial and value for money issues

7.1 None arising.

Legal implications

8.1 None arising.

Climate implications

9.1 None arising.

Other significant implications

10.1 None arising.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Paulette Brown	17.12.21
Finance	Janice Hadfield	17.12.21
Service Director	NA	
Report sponsor	Simon Riley – Strategic Director of Corporate Resources	21.12.21
Other(s)	Liz Moore – Head of HR	15.12.21
	Judy Levitt – Principal Service Manager	13.12.21

Background papers:	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Foster Carer Leave Policy Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment