



South Northamptonshire Council



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Compassionate Leave POLICY

POLICY	COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY
Author/Job Title	Mandy Targett/HRBP
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CONTENTS

1.	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	3
2.	<u>POLICY STATEMENT</u>	3
3.	<u>OBJECTIVES</u>	3
4.	<u>LEGISLATION AND REGULATION</u>	4
5.	<u>PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</u>	5
6.	<u>POLICY DETAIL – OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION</u>	5
7.	<u>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</u>	7
8.	<u>CONSULTATION</u>	7
9.	<u>MONITORING AND REVIEW</u>	7

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The councils recognise that adopting a compassionate leave policy supports employees who are going through bereavement and grief following the death of a close family member. The councils are sympathetic to any employee when they lose a close member of their family and are committed to treating the individual with sensitivity and compassion.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that compassionate leave is granted in a fair and equitable manner whilst at the same time, recognising that compassionate leave arrangements need to be flexible in individual circumstances. The aim is to set down clear guidance in the use of and application of compassionate leave.
- 1.3 The compassionate leave policy should not be confused with the statutory right to time off for dependants which is covered in the family friendly policy.
- 1.4 In circumstances where an employee is required to care for a critically or terminally ill family member the councils will be as flexible as possible. Examples of this may include granting short notice annual leave or flexitime, allowing the employee to work from home or authorising a period of unpaid leave.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Compassionate leave is designed to enable employees to take time off to deal with the circumstances following the death of a close family member. The councils will adopt a compassionate and flexible approach to ensure that the impact on both the employee and the organisation is minimised

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure that the councils balance the demands of work with family life for staff wherever possible.

4.LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

- 4.1 By virtue of the Employment Rights Act 1996, all workers are entitled to time off for dependants.

5.PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 5.1 Compliance with and performance of this policy will be monitored by the policy owner, the Strategic HR Manager.

6.POLICY DETAIL – OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 All employees are entitled to request compassionate leave regardless of their length of service.
- 6.2 Up to five days paid compassionate leave will usually be granted in the event of the death of an employee's:-
- Spouse or partner
 - Child (including step-children)
 - Parent (including step-parent)
 - Parent-in law
 - Sibling (including step sibling)
 - Grandparent
 - Grandchild
- 6.2 This list is not exhaustive, and will be reviewed in individual circumstances where Senior Management has discretion, in consultation with the HR Business Partner.

- 6.3 An employee must request compassionate leave as soon as is practically possible given the circumstances of the situation, this may however be after the employee has returned to work.
- 6.4 If a manager wishes to approve a period of compassionate leave (up to five days) they must email the Human Resources inbox confirming the employees name and the dates applicable.
- 6.5 Managers will consider requests sympathetically, reasonably, in confidence and in consultation with his/her HR Business Partner. The employee should be notified of a decision as quickly as possible.
- 6.6 Where five days compassionate leave is insufficient, consideration should be given to other leave options including annual leave, flexitime, parental leave and time off for dependents leave if applicable.
- 6.7 Further compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of a member of Senior Management.

REFUSING A REQUEST

- 6.8 A manager will not unreasonably refuse a request for compassionate leave. If the manager feels they are unable to grant a request they must seek guidance from their HR Business Partner.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- 6.9 Managers are encouraged to discuss on-going additional support whilst the employee is taking compassionate leave and upon their return to work. Such consideration could include short-term flexibility in working arrangements and a referral to Occupational Health for counselling or other well-being advice.
- 6.10 It is important for managers to remember that special or significant days such as the inquest, anniversary of the death or the birthday of the person who has died can also be particularly difficult times for employees.

6.11 Grief does not have predicted stages and phases. Everyone reacts differently to bereavement, and this should be understood and respected by both managers and colleagues.

7.EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

7.1 The councils will try and accommodate religious beliefs and customs concerning funeral arrangements where it is reasonable and practicable to do so. All requests will be carefully considered in consultation with the HR Business Partner.

8.CONULTATION

8.1 This policy has been consulted with and reviewed by Joint Employee Council, Unison, Joint Management Team between 19th May and 9th June 2017.

9.MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1 The Strategic HR Manager is responsible for the development, review and implementation of this policy. This policy will be monitored regularly (every 3 years) and will always be reviewed when there are significant changes to employment legislation.
