

Co-operative Assistance Network Limited

Parental Leave Policy

An employee has the right to parental leave if they:

- Have been employed by the Co-operative for one year or more
- Are an 'employee', with a contract of employment

and they:

- Are a parent named on the child's birth certificate; or,
- Are named on the child's adoption certificate; or,
- Have legal parental responsibility for a child under five (18 if disabled); or,
- Have retained formal parental responsibility for the children in the event of a separation.

Foster parents do not have rights to parental leave.

If an employee does not qualify for parental leave but needs time off to care for a child, the co-operative will give reasonable consideration to requests for the employee to:

- Take paid holiday
- Change the number of hours the employee works per week

If a genuine emergency arises for which the employee requires time off, refer to the Compassionate Leave Policy.

An employee who has the right to parental leave may take a total of up to 13 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each of their children up until their fifth birthday, subject to a maximum of four weeks' leave for any one child in any year. (For these purposes, a year starts either when the child is born, or on completion of one year's employment by the employee, whichever comes later.)

This is in addition to Bank Holidays and Annual Leave. For adopted children the entitlement is up to 13 weeks' unpaid parental leave until the fifth anniversary of their placement or until their 18th birthday, whichever comes first.

If the child is disabled (that is, getting disability living allowance) the entitlement is for up to 18 weeks' parental leave until their 18th birthday. Parental leave is an individual right and cannot be transferred between parents.

Parental leave must normally be taken in blocks of full weeks, so time off in odd days – for example, to take a child to the dentist – should come from time off in lieu or annual leave or outside of working hours. However if the child has a disability, time off may be taken in days instead of weeks, so parental leave could be used e.g. for regular hospital visits.

All requests for parental leave should be made by email to the Support Services Team Leader. Requests must be made with at least one month's notice unless the leave is to be taken immediately after the birth or adoption of the child in which case the request should give notice one month before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or placement. In cases where this may not be possible, (for example if the child is born prematurely or where less than one month's notice is received of an adoption placement) notice should be given as soon as possible.

Parental leave will start on the day the child is born or placed, regardless of whether that is earlier or later than the date given, provided that the proper period of notice has been given in the first instance.

If requested by Support Services Team Leader a worker must be prepared to show them a copy of:

- The child's birth certificate; or
- The papers confirming the child's adoption or the date of placement; or
- The papers confirming parental responsibility; or
- The award of disability living allowance for the child.

The Support Services Team Leader shall respond to requests for Parental Leave within seven days. Requests for Parental Leave will automatically be granted if the leave is to be taken immediately after the birth or adoption, however the Support Services Team Leader may postpone a request for leave for up to two months if, and only if, in their opinion the granting of the request would result in undue disruption to the conduct of the business and no alternative arrangements can be made. In this event the Support Services Team Leader shall state the reason for the postponement, and shall agree new dates in discussion with the employee. The length of leave shall be equivalent to the amount applied for. In this instance leave may be taken even if the entitlement period has expired.

Responsible Department: HR

Implementation Date: 15 October 2010

Review period: 5 years

Next review due: 15 October 2022

Agreed at Directors Meeting of [unknown]

Passed at Members Meeting of 15 October 2010