

CTC COMPASSIONATE / EMERGENCY LEAVE POLICY AMENDED AT ITS FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 15/05/18

1 Introduction

1.1 Generally employees should not assume that any emergency will be covered by compassionate leave. In most circumstances employees will be expected to use their Flexi time (or to make up the time) to meet most personal or family emergencies. The scheme applies equally to all employees.

2 Compassionate Leave

2.1 Close Relatives:

An employee may be granted up to 7 days compassionate leave of absence with pay in cases of the death of a close relative. This at the absolute discretion of the Town Clerk. In the case of the Town Clerk the permission of the Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee / full Council should be sought. (Annual leave / Flexi time should not be taken into account in these circumstances).

2.2 A close relative is described as:

- Wife Husband Partner Parent Child or grandchild
- Other dependent (i.e someone for whom an employee may care)
- It could also be someone who has acted as a sole carer for the employee (eg grandparent, foster family etc)

2.3 Other family members:

An employee may be granted paid time off to attend the funeral of a brother or sister, brother- or sister-in-law, grandparent or person standing in a similar relationship. This would normally be one day but up to 3 days may be granted where this is deemed appropriate, eg if the employee is responsible for making funeral arrangements, or there is significant travelling required. (Annual leave / Flexi time should not be taken into account in these circumstances).

2.4 Critical Illness:

To help employees deal with a critical illness of a close relative or where they are a carer for another individual (eg elderly neighbour who has no other support etc), an employee may be granted up to 7 days paid compassionate leave in any leave year. (Annual leave / Flexi time should not be taken into account in these circumstances).

2.5 The Compassionate Leave Process:

Compassionate leave has to be approved by the Town Clerk up to the 7-days (paid) maximum. Any requirement for time over and above this would be referred to the Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee / full Council by the Town Clerk. Any compassionate leave granted should be reported to the next Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee / full Council meeting.

2.6 Notice of Compassionate Leave Requirement:

It is important to recognise that, from time to time, employees may need to be granted compassionate leave with minimum notice, to make arrangements for dependant relatives. In emergencies employees will be granted leave immediately and arrangements made for consideration to be given to whether or not paid Compassionate leave / Flexi-time or unpaid leave is granted at a later date.

2.7 Flexi time:

Employees shall manage their Flexi-time to enable, as far as possible, the needs of personal / family emergencies to be met. In the event of a bereavement, or critical illness where an employee is the carer, requiring leave in excess of the provisions above, consideration should be given to any Flexi time the employee has accrued and which might be used to meet the requirement.

2.8 Unpaid Leave:

In exceptional cases unpaid leave will be considered, depending on the circumstances. An employee may request, in writing, a period of unpaid leave for a limited amount of time. Applications for leave of absence without pay on compassionate grounds are discretionary and subject to formal approval by the Town Clerk / Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee or full Council.

3 Time Off For Dependants / Family Emergencies

3.1 All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during normal hours of work in order to deal with family emergencies, BUT there is no contractual or statutory right to be paid for absences relating to family emergencies. Any payment of salary during time off is made at the absolute discretion of the Clerk / Council.

3.2 The right to take time off enables employees to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem and make any necessary longer term arrangements, eg if a dependant falls ill or has been involved in an accident or assaulted, when a partner is having a baby, to make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured, to deal with the death of a dependant, to make funeral arrangements, to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant, such as when a childminder fails to turn up, to deal with an incident involving a child whilst they are at school.

3.3 For these purposes, a "dependant" is a spouse, partner, child or parent or someone who lives as part of your family. It does not include tenants, boarders or employees living in the family home. In cases of illness, injury or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance. This may be where the employee is the primary carer or the only person who can help in an emergency.

3.4 In the event of a family emergency occurring while at work, the employee must immediately inform the Clerk / Deputy of the nature of the emergency and seek their express permission to leave work early.

3.5 In the event of a family emergency occurring outside normal hours of work an employee must contact the Council Office and speak to the Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable and as close to the normal starting time as possible. In any event, this must be no later than two hours after your normal starting time.

3.6 Details Required:

Details of the nature of the emergency, the reason for absence and how long the employee expects to be absent from work must be given. Where the emergency is ongoing, the employee must report to the Office on a daily basis. The Clerk / Deputy must be updated on the reason for the ongoing absence and how long it is expected to continue. The Clerk / Deputy must be informed as soon as possible of any change to the anticipated return to work date.

3.7 The Council envisages that the amount of Compassionate / Emergency Leave taken will usually be a few days at most. Flexi-time is generally enough to help an employee cope with the immediate crisis. Should it not be possible to make arrangements within this timeframe, the employee must contact the Clerk / Deputy and explain why further absence is required. Authorisation of such continued absence will be at the absolute discretion of the Clerk or, in the case of the Clerk, by the Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee / full Council.

3.8 The right to time off under these rules is intended to cover unforeseen family emergencies. If an employee knows in advance that they are going to need time off, they should speak to the Clerk / Deputy about the possibility of booking such time in advance as part of annual leave / Flexi-time arrangements.

3.9 In the event that Emergency Leave is granted, Council would appreciate that, if an Employee is able to work remotely during any of that time, the Council's goodwill is reciprocated, with hours worked being logged on the timesheet.

3.10 The Council reserves the right to ask an employee to provide supporting evidence of the family emergency on return to work. Employees must also complete a Family Emergencies Absence Form immediately on their return. These forms are available from The Town Clerk.

3.11 Employees are reminded that it is a serious disciplinary offence to knowingly provide false information on a Family Emergencies Absence Form or to dishonestly claim a right to time off to deal with a family emergency. Any offence will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure and, depending on the circumstances, could amount to gross misconduct rendering the employee liable to summary dismissal.

4 Time off for Domestic Emergencies

4.1 Unforeseen Emergencies at Home:

The Council recognises that employees will occasionally experience unforeseen emergencies at home, such as burst pipes, the failure of a heating system, a fire or a burglary. This policy is intended to allow those who experience genuine domestic emergencies to take a reasonable amount of Flexi Time / unpaid time off during normal hours of work, at the Council's discretion, in order to deal with that emergency.

4.2 Planned Domestic Appointments:

This policy **DOES NOT**, however, apply to dealing with planned domestic issues, such as routine house or appliance repairs, house refurbishment, the installation of new appliances, the delivery of furniture or other goods, house valuations etc.

4.3 In the event of a domestic emergency occurring while at work, an employee must immediately inform the Clerk / Deputy of the nature of the emergency and seek their express permission to leave work early.

4.4 In the event of a domestic emergency occurring outside normal hours of work, an employee must contact the Council Office and speak to the Clerk / Deputy at the earliest possible opportunity and as close to the normal starting time as possible.

4.4 Details Required:

Details of the nature of the domestic emergency, the reason for absence and how long the employee expects to be absent from work must be given. The Council envisages that the amount of unpaid leave granted will be a day at most and may often be only a matter of hours.

4.5 If you require further time off, you should speak to the Clerk / Deputy about the possibility of taking such time as part of your Flexi-time / annual leave entitlement.

4.6 There is NO contractual right to be paid for approved absences relating to domestic emergencies. Any payment of salary during time off is made at the absolute discretion of the Council.

4.7 The Council reserves the right to ask for supporting evidence of the domestic emergency on return to work. It is a serious disciplinary offence to dishonestly take time off to deal with a domestic emergency. Any offence will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure and, depending on the circumstances, could amount to gross misconduct rendering the employee liable to summary dismissal.