

UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE

1. Introduction

Hackney supports employees in achieving a balance between their lives at work and their lives away from work. This forms part of the Council's commitment to improving services and increasing opportunities for all. **Unpaid Parental Leave** is one of the family leave options available to Council employees.

2. Qualifying Criteria

To qualify for Parental Leave, employees must meet the following criteria:

- Have at least 1 years continuous service with Hackney

and

- Be the parent of a child under the age of 18 (named on the birth certificate)
or
- Have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 18 (under the Children's Act 1989)
or
- Have adopted a child under the age of 18 (named on the child's adoption certificate)

If the employee's child is disabled, the employee is entitled to parental leave up to the child's 18th birthday. A 'disabled child' is one that is entitled to disability living allowance.

Both parents has the right to parental leave.

3. Parental Leave

Employees may receive up to 18 weeks unpaid leave to care for each individual child (including where the child is disabled).

- Parental leave can be taken up to and including the child's 18th birthday
- Leave can only be taken in blocks of a week, so a full-time employee who takes two days leave will have "used up" one weeks' leave (unless the child is disabled)

- If the child is disabled, the employee may take leave in blocks of a day. A 'disabled child' is one that is entitled to disability living allowance.
- Employees may take up to 4 weeks of parental leave in any one year, for each child. The year starts from the point the employee qualifies for parental leave i.e. at one years service or the date the child is born/adopted, which ever is later
- Where the employee has multiple births e.g. triplet or twins, the entitlement of 18 weeks is per child.
- Parental Leave may also be taken by a prospective father who wishes to attend the birth of the baby or adoption of a child

4. General Provisions

The unpaid leave is not a break in service.

The employee will continue to accrue annual leave and Bank Holidays during the period of parental leave.

5. Notification

Employees must give their manager at least 21 days notice of their intention to take Parental Leave and provide the dates that they plan to start and end the parental leave. A prospective father should let their manager know the expected date of childbirth.

The employee must provide verifying evidence, if requested, such as the birth certificate of the child.

6. Postponing Parental leave

The Council may postpone the Parental Leave for up to six months if necessary because of business needs. However, managers will make every effort to accommodate the employee and Parental Leave would only be postponed in exceptional circumstances.

Where an employee has requested Parental Leave to attend the birth of a baby or on the date of the adoption of a child, then it will not be possible to postpone the Parental Leave.

7. Returning from Parental Leave

Employees who take Parental Leave for a period of four weeks or less are entitled to return to their job.

Employees must return to work on time after a period of parental leave. If the employee decides to resign, they must give the Council the appropriate notice (in accordance with their contract of employment).

8. Record keeping

Employees have one entitlement to Parental leave for each child that follows them if they change employment. The leave should be monitored for the Council's records and also because we may be asked for details of Parental Leave taken by a future employer.