

# FOSTER CARER POLICY



[www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## FOSTER CARER POLICY

This policy sets out the support for employees who are responsible for the care of a child, or children, under a foster care arrangement. It attempts to strike a balance between the operational needs of the Council and the needs of the employee to meet his/her obligations as a foster carer.

Foster carers are responsible for the daily care of a child who is unable to live with his or her own parents. Foster care may be short-term or long-term.

### **1. What do I need to tell my manager if I intend to become a foster carer?**

- 1.1. You are advised to tell your manager that you are to become a foster parent as soon as practicable. This is to ensure that your line manager and colleagues can provide support to you in this important role. Where paid release is requested under this policy for activities described in 2.1 below, you should give 4 weeks notice as this will ensure that your manager has sufficient notice to make any necessary arrangements for staff cover. Requests made with less than 4 weeks notice will not be unreasonably refused.

### **2. Will I get any time off to care for my new foster child/children?**

- 2.1. You may need to take time off to help the child/children settle into the new environment. You may also need time off to attend training courses, meetings or appointments with the child/children. Time off should be requested in writing and the period of time must be specified.
- 2.2. You will be allowed up to five days paid leave for each placement (this may be one or more child at a time) to enable you to manage the activities in 2.1.
- 2.3. Paid leave will be allowed for up to two placements (ie up to ten days) each year.
- 2.4. The leave is an individual entitlement.

### **3. What if my foster child is sick?**

- 3.1 You are entitled to take reasonable time off during working hours under the Council's compassionate leave policy if caring for sick dependants (eg including where the child has been injured or assaulted) or following the breakdown of regular care arrangements (eg the regular childminder becomes ill or to deal with an incident in a period during which an educational establishment would have been responsible for the child).
- 3.2 You may be required to provide the line manager or supervisor with medical evidence from the regular carer's GP or a letter signed by the childminder or regular carer.

3.3 Further information may be found in the [compassionate leave policy](#) documents on IRIS.

#### 4. Can I take any other time off?

Yes, you have the right to take parental leave and the right to apply to work flexibly.

4.1. Parental leave - for more information on parental leave please refer to the policy document on IRIS.

#### 4.2. Flexible Working

- i. Employees who have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 17 (under the age of 18 for a child with a disability) have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly.
- ii. In order to make a request for flexible working, an employee must:
  - Be an employee of Reading Borough Council
  - Have at least 26 weeks continuous employment with the council
  - Have a child under 17, or under 18 in the case of a child with a disability, the date the application is made (statutory provision)
  - Make an application no later than two weeks before the child's 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (statutory provision)
  - Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing (statutory provision)
  - Be making the application to enable the child to be cared for (statutory provision)
  - Not be an agency worker
  - Not have made another application to work flexibly under the right, in the last 12 months
- iii. The right to apply is designed to meet the needs of both parents and employers. It aims to facilitate discussion and encourage both employee and manager to consider flexible working patterns and to find a solution that suits both, enabling an effective work-life balance. The procedure is available on IRIS.
- iv. Further information on flexible working can be found in the policy documents on IRIS.

HR August 2015

**FOSTER CARER LEAVE REQUEST FORM**

Name: .....

Directorate: .....

Payroll reference no: .....

Position: .....

Location: .....

Foster leave dates: From: ..... To: .....

Additional comments in support of your application:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

---

Authorised by: .....

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Position: .....  
(*manager*)

Dated: .....

**Please forward to the Payroll & Employment Services Team  
ABSENCE SHOULD BE DECLARED ON MONTHLY ABSENCE REPORT FORM AS  
ADOPTION LEAVE UNDER 'OTHER'**