

Fostering Friendly Policy

Warwickshire County Council

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Joint Owners:

Director of Children and Families

Director of Workforce and Local Services

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Contents

1. About this document	3
2. Policy - Key points:	3
3. Foster carer leave - process	3
4. Foster carer notification	4
5. Flexible and agile working.....	4
6. Fostering to adopt and related benefits.....	4
7. Parental bereavement leave	4
8. Time off for dependents	5
9. Other support.....	5
10. Documents and further reference	5

1. About this document

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care. This policy sets out how the organisation supports foster carers in employment.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees of the council except those who are based in schools, who are applying to become foster carers or are approved foster carers.

2. Policy:

- Warwickshire County Council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care;
- Subject to business need, the council is committed to granting:
 - Up to 5 days' paid leave (pro rata for part time staff) for employees who intend to become foster carers, during the year prior to approval for the purposes of undertaking training and/or activity in relation to their assessment as foster carers
 - Up to 5 days' paid leave per annum (pro rata for part time staff) for employees who are approved foster carers in the years following approval for the purposes of undertaking learning, development or preparation for the placement of a child or young person;

3. Foster carer leave - process

- 3.1 The council recognises the importance of training, and where possible will support training and activities undertaken by foster carers.
- 3.2 Leave requests must be submitted to the line manager via Your HR using the special category of 'Foster Carers – Paid Leave', under 'Other Absence'. Whilst requests will be met where possible, leave will be at the discretion of the line manager subject to business need, with ultimate discretion by the Director if the employee is not satisfied with the decision of their line manager. Permission, once given, will not be rescinded unless there are exceptional circumstances. Foster carers leave not taken during the relevant year cannot be carried forward into the next year.
- 3.3 As much notice as possible must be given for any leave being requested to allow absence planning. Evidence must be provided of the reason for the leave request, for example, training course. Employees who need time off

for fostering activities, beyond the leave referred to above, are expected to use normal annual leave entitlement.

- 3.4 Foster carer leave should not be used in place of other leave entitlements, for example, to arrange care for dependants or parental leave, where policies or procedures already exist.

4. Foster carer notification

- 4.1 Employees must request the prior written permission of their line manager to be a foster carer, in line with their terms and conditions of employment. Requests will be supported wherever possible and will not be unreasonably withheld or withdrawn unless, for example, it is deemed that it impacts or conflicts with employment with the Council. Evidence of the fostering assessment process and approval will need to be provided by the employee to their manager. Employees should also inform their line manager in writing, at the earliest opportunity, if they stop foster caring.

5. Flexible and agile working

- 5.1 The council understands that employees who are also foster carers may require some flexibility in their working arrangements in order to carry out their fostering role. Warwickshire County Council is committed, wherever possible, to creating a fostering friendly organisation that offers flexible and agile working arrangements which respond to the needs of foster carers, where this is compatible with the demands of their job.
- 5.2 More information on the council's flexible and agile working offer can be found on the Council's [intranet](#). This includes the statutory right to request flexible working.

6. Fostering to adopt and related benefits

- 6.1 Employees who are approved as foster carers under the category of "fostering for adoption" are eligible to take the same leave and pay as a parent eligible to claim adoption leave and pay. They are also eligible for statutory paternity leave and pay, shared parental leave and parental leave. See [Family Friendly Working Guide](#)

7. Parental bereavement leave

- 7.1 Foster carers who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 may be entitled to take parental bereavement leave. See [Family Friendly Working Guide](#)

8. Time off for dependents

- 8.1 Foster carers are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to assist or to make care arrangements for fostered children under the [Family Friendly Working Guide](#)

9. Other support

- 9.1 The following support is also available to employees who are foster carers: -
- Access to a confidential, 24 hour free-of-charge helpline under Workplace Wellness, the council's employee assistance provider. See [Workplace wellness](#)
 - Wellbeing support – see [Your Wellbeing](#)

10. Documents and further reference

- [ACE Guidance Early Permanence Fostering for Adoption](#)
- [Foster Caring Charter](#)
- [Support Pledge for foster carers - Summary](#)
- [Support Pledge for foster carers](#)