

# HR & OD POLICIES

human resources and organisational development



## Special Leave

## Local Government Employees

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Aberdeenshire Council acknowledges that employees have commitments outside work that may on occasion disrupt their working week. It is considered to be in the interests of both the Council and employees that the 'work/life balance' of employees is maintained. To address the problems that work/life conflicts can cause, a number of types of Special Leave are offered to help employees balance their work and other commitments.

## 2. SCOPE

The provisions of this Policy apply to all employees of Aberdeenshire Council except for Teaching Staff..

## 3. SUMMARY

Aberdeenshire Council offers a number of Special Leave options to cover various circumstances. Some of the options are paid, while others are unpaid. A summary of each type of Special Leave is provided below to help in identifying the leave that may be applicable in your situation (more than one type of leave may be available in some circumstances, and employees are entitled to exhaust paid leave options before taking unpaid leave). A set of Guidance Notes setting out the details of the entitlement and any conditions attached is provided as indicated. Alternatively, you may wish to consider using [Annual Leave](#), which is described in a separate Policy.

Attention is drawn to the Procedure following this summary, which give important information regarding special leave and other terms and conditions of employment.

## 4. UNPAID LEAVE

### Extended Holidays

Extended holiday periods of up to three months are available. Please see the [Extended Holidays Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## Parental Leave

Parental leave is available to mothers, fathers, adoptive parents, foster carers, and others who have or expect to have parental responsibility for a child, for the purpose of caring for that child. Conditions relating to length of service required, age of child, notice periods, amount of leave available, etc. Can be found in the [Parental Leave Fact Sheet](#). See also [Maternity/Adoption Support Leave Fact Sheet](#).

## Political Candidature

An employee who has been nominated and is standing for election to a political post (e.g. Member of a Council other than Aberdeenshire, Member of Parliament, Member of Scottish Parliament, Member of European Parliament) will be entitled to up to two weeks unpaid leave during the Election Campaign. Requests for Annual Leave will also be authorised. Any requests for leave outwith the Election Campaign period will be considered and decided by the Head of Service. The agreed additional leave may be taken as annual leave or as further unpaid leave.

Please note that any Aberdeenshire Council employee wishing to become an Aberdeenshire Councillor is not required to resign prior to being nominated as a candidate but, if they are duly elected, he or she must resign immediately from their post as a Council employee in accordance with Section 31A of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004.

Employees in positions designated as 'politically restricted' may not seek election as a Councillor, MP, MSP or MEP, and must resign prior to nomination. The leave provisions above will therefore not apply in such cases. Employees should be aware that Council premises are not to be used to promote the election of any candidate.

## Service in Non-Regular Forces

An employee who is mobilised as a member of the Volunteer Reserve Forces will receive unpaid leave. Please see the [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#) for more information.

## Time Off for Dependants

Time Off for Dependants may be used by any employee for urgent family reasons, where their presence is required to care for or make arrangements for care of a dependant, or in case of bereavement. The [Time Off for Dependants Fact Sheet](#) describe situations in which the leave may be taken, and explain who counts as a 'dependant' in each case.

In some cases, Bereavement, Compassionate, or Family Illness leave (see below) may also be appropriate.

## Jury Service/Witnesses

All employees are entitled to paid leave to serve on a jury or if they are summoned as a witness, subject to the deduction of allowances received. Information on notification requirements and claiming allowances is contained in the [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#).

## Other Unpaid Leave (employees with fixed annual leave)

Employees whose annual leave is designated to be taken at set times (e.g Those employed in schools) may be granted Unpaid Leave for purposes such as attending a wedding or graduation, sitting a driving test or moving

## 5. PAID LEAVE

### Bereavement Leave

An employee is entitled to bereavement leave on the death of a family member or partner, or to attend a funeral such as that of a friend or neighbour. The amount of leave given is dependent on the relationship. Please see the [Bereavement Leave Fact Sheet](#) for further information. See also [Time Off for Dependants Fact Sheet](#).

### Compassionate Leave

Paid leave may be granted where an employee is facing an extreme family situation (e.g. Immediate family member/ partner is seriously ill or is missing). Appropriate leave to a maximum of two weeks may be given initially by the employee's line manager, following which the situation should be reviewed by the manager, employee and Human Resources.

At this point, alternatives such as a temporary reduction in hours or unpaid leave should be considered, although further Compassionate Leave may be given. Each situation will be assessed individually, and managers should seek guidance from Human Resources regarding situations which may merit giving Compassionate Leave. See also [Time Off for Dependants Fact Sheet](#).

## Donating Blood or Bone Marrow

Paid leave is available for making donations of blood or bone marrow. Please see [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Elections

Paid leave is available to employees who wish to assist at elections (e.g As presiding officer, counter or polling clerk) and for attendance at required briefings. Please see [Elections Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Emergency Services Volunteer

Employees who are members of the approved Voluntary Emergency Service Organisations listed in the Guidance Notes may be entitled to take paid leave to fulfil their obligations with these organisations. Please see [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Family Illness

Employees are entitled to one day of paid leave to care for a close relative/spouse/partner/foster child who has been taken ill suddenly or been injured and is unable to look after themselves, and to make care arrangements for further days if necessary. (The leave may be taken as one full day or as an afternoon plus the following morning if required). However, employees should endeavour to have alternative arrangements already in place so that leave is not required. [Time Off for Dependants Fact Sheet](#).

## Investiture

In recognition of their achievement, employees who receive Honours in the Queen's Honours List (e.g An MBE) in recognition of their Council work may take three days paid leave to attend their Investiture. If a travel allowance is offered then this should be claimed. If however an allowance is not available then travel costs will be paid by the Council in accordance with the [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#).

## Job Interviews

Employees may attend internal job interviews within their working day, but must give their line manager as much notice as possible of their absence and only be away from work for the minimum time necessary to attend the interview. External (non Aberdeenshire Council) interviews must take place during the employee's own time (e.g Annual leave).

Employees attending internal interviews should claim interview expenses in the same way as external candidates, not via the [Travel and Subsistence Claim Form](#).

## Medical Appointments

Although employees are generally expected to attend medical appointments in their own time, in some circumstances paid leave is available. Please see [Medical Appointments Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Maternity/Adoption Support Leave

Five days paid leave irrespective of length of service. Further five days paid paternity/adoption support leave if employee has 26 weeks continuous service either at the start of the 15th week before the baby is due or the week official notification is received of the adoption or the date of placement. Please see [Maternity/Adoption Fact Sheet](#) for further information. See also [Time Off for Dependants Fact Sheet](#) and [Parental Leave Fact Sheet](#).

## Public Duties

Employees are entitled to reasonable time off to fulfil duties as a Justice of the Peace or member of a statutory panel (e.g. Children's Panel, Employment Tribunal) subject to the discretion of the Service. Please see [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Service in Non Regular Forces

Employees who are members of the non-regular forces and who attend an annual training camp may be entitled to paid leave, subject to the deduction of service pay and allowances received.

An employee who is mobilised as a member of the Volunteer Reserve Forces will receive unpaid leave. Please see [Services to the Community Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Parent Council Membership

An employee who is a member of a Parent Council of an Aberdeenshire Council school will be entitled to paid leave for the purposes of attending Appointment Committees or Sub Committees. Leave for other Parent Council activities occurring within working hours will be unpaid.

## Sporting Activities

An employee who is a member of an official national team (e.g As competitor, manager or coach) will be entitled to up to five days paid leave per year for the purpose of attending training and competitions as a member of that team.

## Trade Union and Health and Safety Duties

Time off for the above work related activities is available in certain circumstances, please refer to separate policies on these subjects, [Trade Union Policy](#) and Health and Safety Policy.

## Maternity and Adoption Leave

Provisions are detailed in [Maternity Leave Policy](#) and [Adoption Leave Policy](#).

## Foster Carers Leave

Approved Foster Carers will be entitled to request paid leave (if their presence is required in relation to their Foster child) for the purpose of attending Looked after Children's Reviews and Children's Hearings. Please see [Foster Carers Fact Sheet](#) for further information.

## Exam/Study Leave

Paid leave is available in certain circumstances. Advice is available from Learning & Development.

# Special Leave – Local Government Employees

## Index of Documents

### Policy

<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Previous Revision Date</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
01-12-2003	-	Creation of all Documents
22-07-2011	01-12-2003	Political Candidature Changed
24-06-2015	22-07-2011	Format Update