



Dependency Leave

Overview

You can apply for dependency leave if you need time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant.

The amount of leave you can take and whether you will be paid depends on what the situation is, your working pattern and how long you have worked for the Council.

If you need time off to attend or arrange a funeral, you should apply for compassionate leave instead.

Who is a dependant?

A dependant is someone who relies on you for their care. This could include:

- your wife, husband, co-habitee or partner
- any person to whom you are next of kin or nominated next of kin
- your parent, guardian or foster parent
- your brother or sister
- your son or daughter
- your grandparent or grandchild
- any disabled person that you are normally responsible for

Other well-established and close relationships may also be recognised. This could include your in-laws if there is a 'demonstrable close dependency relationship'.

In some cases, sickness may create a dependency where it has not existed previously.

Work out dependency leave entitlement

All permanent employees, including part-timers, are entitled to apply for dependency leave. However, you must have worked for the Council for at least a year to qualify for paid dependency leave. If you haven't, you will be offered an equivalent amount of unpaid leave.



How much paid leave can I take?

Dependency leave will be considered for emergencies involving:

- non-routine medical appointments
- breakdown in care arrangements
- care for a seriously ill dependant
- care following a bereavement

Each circumstance has a different leave entitlement, as described in the summary of dependency leave entitlements. Entitlement is pro rata for part-time staff.

Staff are only entitled to a combined total of 10 paid dependency days in each leave year. If you reach the maximum of 10 paid days, your manager may consider further extensions of unpaid leave on a case-by-case basis.

Compassionate leave to attend a funeral is calculated separately and not included as part of the 10-day combined entitlement.

Apply for dependency leave

Dependency leave applies only to emergencies and must be approved by managers and directors/heads of department.

You can't have time off if you knew about a situation beforehand.

Application process

If you're facing an emergency and think dependency leave would be appropriate, you should:

Step 1 – speak to your manager

If possible, let them know about the leave in advance so they can arrange cover while you're off. If this isn't possible, telephone or let them know as soon as you can.



Step 2 – apply for leave

Complete a dependency leave application form. You can do this after you've taken the leave, if there isn't time before. You're only entitled to a combined total of 10 paid dependency days in your leave year, so you need to consider any dependency leave you've already taken.

Step 3 – provide evidence

Give your manager any relevant evidence they ask for (e.g. copies of medical certificates or appointment letters etc). This is required to ensure the scheme isn't abused.

Leave extensions

Directors and heads of department can extend dependency leave by an unpaid period equivalent to any period that's already been approved, if they consider it appropriate.

For example, if you had taken 10 days' paid leave to look after a seriously ill dependant, they may consider approving a further 10 days of unpaid leave.

If you need need to extend your leave further, or your situation involves a longer-term or terminal illness, please speak to your manager. They will discuss the situation with your director or head of department and HR.

Help and support

If you have any questions or need help completing the application form, speak to your manager or contact HR.

Authorise dependency leave

The list of circumstances where dependency leave may be appropriate isn't exhaustive. This means managers should consider all reasonable requests for dependency leave sympathetically.

Managers should also recognise that staff may not be able to complete an application form before going on leave, depending on the nature of their emergency. In such cases, they should speak to you to discuss the situation (by phone is ok) and complete their application after returning from leave.



Application process

If an employee approaches you to discuss or request dependency leave, you should:

Step 1 – informal chat

Arrange to speak to the employee in private as soon as you can (this may be over the phone). Listen sympathetically as they are likely to be under considerable stress, and treat any personal information they share with you in the strictest confidence. You can also let them know counselling support is available.

Step 2 – check dependency leave is appropriate

Discuss the circumstances and try to establish if there is a dependency relationship. If it is, ask the employee to complete a dependency leave application form.

Step 3 – establish leave entitlement

Check the summary of dependency leave entitlements to see how much leave applies. You must also check iTrent and team records to see if they've already taken any dependency leave which needs to be taken into account. Employees are only entitled to a combined total of 10 paid dependency days in their leave year.

Step 4 – determine if leave is paid

Check if the employee has at least one year's service, as this determines whether they are entitled to paid leave. If not, they can be offered an equivalent amount of unpaid leave.

Step 5 – ask for verification

Check what evidence the employee needs to provide (eg medical certificates or appointment letters). Photocopy any documents they give you and attach them to the application.

Step 6 – make a decision

Complete Section 2 of the application form with your recommendation.

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Step 7 – inform the employee

If the leave is rejected or dependency leave isn't appropriate, let the employee know. They can contact HR if they are unhappy about the decision.

Leave extensions

Directors and heads of department can extend dependency leave by an unpaid period equivalent to any period that's already been approved, if they consider it appropriate.

For example, if an employee has taken 10 days' paid leave to look after a seriously ill dependant, this may be extended by a further 10 days of unpaid leave.

If the employee needs to extend their leave further, or the circumstance involves a longer-term or terminal illness, you should discuss the situation with your director or head of department and HR.

Help and support

If you have any questions, are unsure about a case or feel it's exceptional, you should contact HR.