

Special Leave, Time Off to care for Dependants and Flexible Working

The Company has the discretion to grant special leave, with or without payment, in urgent and exceptional circumstances. Application should be made to your Line Manager and the Head of Human Resources, and then passed for approval by a Director.

The main features of dependant care leave are as follows:

1. You are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours if it is necessary to deal with the following matters:
 - to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured;
 - to make arrangements to provide care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
 - as a result of the death of a dependant;
 - because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant;
 - to deal with an incident that involves your child and this occurs unexpectedly when the child is at school or nursery.
2. Your entitlement starts on the first day of your employment. You do not have to be employed with the Company for a minimum period.
3. The range of persons who count as dependants is limited. They include:
 - your wife, husband, non-married partner (including same sex partner), child, parent or other family member who lives in your house **but not** your tenant, lodger or employee;
 - any other person who relies on you for assistance in the circumstances set out in paragraph 1 above. This definition is flexible, but it is not intended to cover (for example) neighbours who need a helping hand occasionally, nor to deal with domestic emergencies such as a water leak or a sick pet.
4. There is no specific amount of time that you are entitled to take off, other than that it should be “reasonable” in the circumstances. The Company’s expectation is that any time off would only be one or two days.
5. There are no specific notice requirements for informing the Company that you wish to take time off, but you do have to notify the Company as soon as reasonably practicable (although this does not have to be in writing).
6. Dependant care leave is unpaid (including in relation to pension contributions) unless the Company reaches a special arrangement with you.

In addition to your legal entitlements, leave of absence for Civil and Public duties may be granted at the discretion of the Company.

Flexible Working Policy

A request for flexible working covers a request to change the hours or days you work or to work from home, as well as job-sharing, term-time working and flexitime, amongst other things.

To apply for flexible working you must have completed at least six months continuous service with the Company at the date the application is made and be responsible for caring for a child under the age of seventeen (or under the age of eighteen, if the child is disabled) or an adult (as defined below).

In respect of an application to work flexibly to care for a child, the application must not be made later than two weeks before the child's sixth birthday (or 18th birthday in the case of a disabled child). You must also have (or expect to have) responsibility for the child's upbringing and be either:

- the mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent of the child; or
- married to or the partner of the child's mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent.

In order to make an application to work flexibly to care for an adult, the adult in question must be aged 18 or over and in need of care and you must be (or expect to be) the person who cares for that adult, and:

- be married to, or the partner or civil partner of, the adult; or
- a relative of that adult; or
- neither of the above, but living at the same address as the adult for whom you care.

Also, you must not have made another application to work flexibly under this Policy during the past 12 months.

Applications should be submitted to your Line Manager and the Head of Human Resources in writing and should include:

- confirmation that you have responsibility for the child's upbringing or for the adult's care;
- what effect (if any) the proposed change will have on your department and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- specify the working pattern you wish to apply for;
- the date the proposed change should take effect; and
- whether a previous application has been made and if so when.

On receipt of the application a meeting will be arranged within 28 days to discuss your application. A work colleague may accompany you to this meeting. If the time and date arranged is not convenient for you or your work colleague you can re-schedule the meeting for a new time and date within seven days.

You will be notified within 14 days after this meeting of the Company's decision in relation to your application.

Should your request be accepted arrangements will be agreed for your working pattern to change. A new working pattern will be a permanent change to your the Contract of employment (unless otherwise agreed) and you have no automatic right to revert back to your former hours of work.

Should your request be declined you must decide whether you wish to appeal against the decision. This appeal must be in writing and submitted to the HR Department within 14 days.

A further meeting will be arranged within 14 days to discuss your appeal. As above, a work colleague may accompany you to this meeting.

Within 14 days after this appeal meeting you will be notified of the Company's decision. Should your appeal be successful arrangements will be agreed for your working pattern to change.

Doctors etc appointments

You should endeavour to ensure that any doctor, dental or similar appointments are made outside of working hours as far as possible.