

Fostering



This document forms part of Somerset County Council's HR&OD Policies and Procedures.

1. [What this policy covers](#)
2. [Principles](#)
3. [Responsibilities](#)
4. [Policy in practice](#)

1. What the policy covers

This policy forms part of Somerset County Council's overall family friendly approach and it attempts to strike a balance between the business needs and the needs of the employee to meet their care obligations.

The policy aims to provide a period of paid leave to enable employees who are designated foster or approved kinship carer to attend appointments, planning meetings, reviews and training and development events. The leave arrangements are designed to recognise the significant demands placed on foster and kinship carers time in addition to normal child caring responsibilities.

2. Principles

Applications for leave are open to all Somerset County Council employees who are designated foster and kinship carers for children and young people looked after by a local authority.

3. Policy in practice

3.1 Leave Entitlement

The employee will be allowed up to eight days paid leave per child fostered/ or under a kinship care order during any leave year, pro rata for part-time employees.

The following evidence can be requested before granting leave:

- Proof of foster caring responsibility
- Proof of kinship carer responsibility
- Proof and details of training course, assessment planning, review meeting or specialist consultation.

This time can be used to help the child/children to settle into the new environment. Foster carers may also need time off to attend training courses, meetings with professionals or appointments with the child/children.

Employees who are thinking of becoming foster carers can request up to a further 36 hours paid leave for the initial training, if this falls within normal working hours. The time off must not detrimentally affect service delivery and will need to be authorised by a line manager.

Requests for leave should be made to the line manager as early as possible and must be agreed in advance. The leave entitlement should be flexible to account for special circumstances or requirements for leave at short notice specifically linked to fostering or kinship carers. The leave would not normally be taken in less than ½ a day blocks however it may be appropriate on occasions for leave to be taken in smaller blocks to meet the needs of the service and the carer.

3.2 How to request leave

Employees who would like to request the leave for fostering or kinship carer responsibilities may make this request in SAP using the leave type 'Foster Carer (paid)'.

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 and procedures already exist.

3.3 Fostering to Adopt

If an employee is a Local Authority foster parent who is also a prospective adopter (dual approved) and a child is placed with them in a Foster to Adopt situation they will be entitled to Adoption leave and pay. Somerset County Council requires notification of a child's placement in accordance with s.22C of the Children Act 1989. This is set out in the Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002 as amended by the Paternity and Adoption Leave (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3206). The amended Regulations affect the extension in relation to children matched with an adopter who is notified of the match on or after 5 April 2015. An employee is not entitled to take ordinary adoption leave in relation to a child in the capacity of his or her adopter if the employee has already taken ordinary adoption leave as a result of that child being placed, or being expected to be placed, with the employee under s.22C (i.e. as a foster parent). See the Adoption Leave Policy.

3.4 Recommend a friend scheme

If you are a Somerset County Council employee by recommending a friend to become a foster carer, you will receive **£150** upon confirmation of their approval.

Fostering



There are no maximum recommendations per year.

This will be paid into your salary at the end of the following month after the approval has been confirmed. Deductions will be made for tax and NI but not pension.

Staff who would like to recommend a friend (having gained their permission) you will need to contact 0800 587 9900.

3.5 Time off for dependents

Foster or kinship carers are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to assist or to make care arrangements for fostered children under the Emergency Time Off for Dependents Policy.