

# New Somerset Council

## Fostering Policy

### Policy Statement

Somerset Council is committed to promoting a family friendly approach, striking a balance between business needs and the needs of the employee to meet their care obligations. As such a period of paid leave is offered to enable employees who are designated foster or approved kinship carers to attend appointments, planning meetings, reviews, training, and development events. These leave arrangements are designed to recognise the significant demands placed on foster and kinship carers time in addition to normal child caring responsibilities.

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

This policy does not form part of the Somerset Council Terms and Conditions and may be subject to change.

### Leave Entitlement

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

The following evidence may be requested before granting leave:

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

This time can be used to help the child(ren) to settle into the new environment. Foster, Kinship, or Connected Carers may also require time off to attend training courses, meetings with professionals, or appointments with the child(ren).

Ahead of fostering, individuals are required to undertake training and assessments. Employees are expected where possible to make appointments for training and assessment outside of paid working hours. Employees can request up to a further 36 hours paid leave for the initial training if this falls within normal working hours.

### Leave Requests

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 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.

Employees who would like to request 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.

### **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 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). 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 [\(add link\)](#).

### **Emergency 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 [\(add link\)](#).

Version	1
Date	
Relevant Legislation	Children Act 1989 Paternity & Adoption Leave Regulations 2014