

Parental Leave – A Policy for Members

Parental leave covers maternity leave, paternity leave and adoption leave in employment law. Employees have certain entitlements in law to a period of leave with a continuation of employment and continuation of pay (of statutory parental leave pay).

Elected members are not employees - they are holding an elected office. They are entitled to continue to hold that office subject to meeting certain minimum criteria and are entitled to continue to receive their basic allowance, regardless of whether they are taking leave or not.

If a member informs the County Council that they will be taking a period of parental leave, the County Council will:

- Agree with the member, any group leader or neighbouring members about who will cover local casework for the member taking parental leave.
- Arrange an out of office message and webpage message to state that the member is taking a period of parental leave and stating the alternative member contact.
- Continue to pay the basic allowance that the member is entitled to receive.
- Agree with the member about how to cover the requirement that they must attend a meeting in a six-month period – either the member can choose to attend a meeting to meet this requirement, or a report can be prepared for Council to ask it to waive the requirement as the member is taking parental leave.
- If the member holds a special role, arrangements would need to be made for someone to cover them – possibly through an appointment by the County Council or by the Leader, for a time-limited period. It would then be for the Council or the Leader to undo the temporary arrangement and re-appoint the member who took parental leave. A special responsibility allowance would/would not be paid during this period (to be confirmed).