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Introduction

Balancing work and life in the 21st century can be a tough act to manage, but help is at hand. Ceredigion County Council is committed to improving the work life balance of employees. The Council recognises that there are occasions/times when employees are required to take time off in addition to their annual leave entitlement

In addition to recent legislation concerning the right to request flexible working for parents of children, from 6 April 2007, a new law gives carers the right to request flexible working. Carers – people looking after disabled and chronically sick family and relatives – sometimes need help juggling their work and home responsibilities.

In a complex modern world, achieving a work-life balance has become a priority for the many, not a concession for the few. To boost our business, Ceredigion County Council require a more flexible and multiskilled workforce. At the same time, employees, including carers, need to balance multiple responsibilities inside and outside the workplace.

Ceredigion's' Work Life Balance policy aims to support various legislations and provide a clear understanding to the support mechanisms available to all employees.

The policy will cover areas such as:

Work Life Balance?	Issue
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maternity Support Leave
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adoption Support Leave
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paternity Support Leave
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parental Leave
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Time off for Dependents
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Flexible Working
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Flexitime Scheme
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Home Working
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annual Leave Entitlements

Maternity Support Leave

Scope

This procedure applies to all full-time and part-time staff (excluding teaching staff).

Responsibility

The Corporate Human Resources Section is responsible for providing relevant information regarding your rights and to advise payroll where Statutory/Occupational Maternity Pay is payable.

Ante-Natal Care

You will be entitled to paid time off during working hours for the purpose of ante-natal care. You may be required to produce an appointment card or some other document confirming all appointments other than the first to your line manager. Antenatal care is not restricted to medical examinations and could include relaxation and parent craft classes as long as these are advised by a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor.

Health & Safety

There is an obligation on the Council to conduct a risk assessment when informed that you are pregnant. Once this assessment has been undertaken appropriate action must be taken to reduce any risks identified. The risk assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified/ experienced person from within your employing department or alternatively by the Corporate Health & Safety section of the authority.

It should be noted that you are prohibited to work for a period of two weeks from the date of childbirth.

Still Birth

The definition of childbirth is the birth of a child either living or dead, after 24 weeks of pregnancy. The right to ordinary maternity leave will continue in the event of still birth after this period.

Definition of Terms

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is payable by the Council to eligible employees who take maternity leave or leave employment because of pregnancy or childbirth.

Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) is payable to eligible employees in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment.

Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)

The Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) is the week in which the baby is due to be born as certified by the employees' doctor or midwife on the maternity certificate (MATB1).

Qualifying Week (QW)

The Qualifying Week (QW) is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)

MATB1 Certificate

The MATB1 is the maternity benefit certificate given to a pregnant woman by the Doctor or Midwife which states the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). The Council cannot pay you your SMP without this certificate.

Maternity Leave

Maternity Leave is the period of time away from work due to Maternity.

Maternity Pay Period (MPP)

The Maternity Pay Period (MPP) is the period during which SMP is payable to an eligible employee. It may start at any time from the 11th week before the EWC. An employee is required to provide no later than the 15th week before the week the baby is due (or as soon as is reasonably practicable) when she wants her maternity pay period / leave to start. An employee can change the date she starts her maternity leave as long as she gives 28 days notice to her employer.

Ordinary Maternity Leave

Ordinary Maternity Leave lasts for a period of 26 weeks

Additional Maternity Leave

Additional Maternity Leave runs from the day after the last day of ordinary maternity leave and can last for a further 26 weeks.

Employer/Employee Contact

During the maternity leave period an employer will make reasonable contact with an employee, and in the same way an employee may make contact with her employer. The frequency and nature of the contact will depend on a number of factors, such as: the nature of the work and the employee's post, any agreement that the employer and employee might have reached before maternity leave began as to contact; and whether either party needs to communicate important information to the other, such as for example news of changes at the workplace that might affect the employee on her return. The contact between employer and employee can be made in any way that best suits either or both of them. For example, it could be by telephone, by email, by letter, involving the employee making a visit to the workplace, or in other ways.

Keeping in Touch Days (KIT days)

Employees may, by mutual agreement with their employer do up to 10 days' work under their contract of employment during the maternity leave period. The type of work that the employee undertakes on keeping in touch days is a matter for agreement between the two parties. They may be used for any activity which would ordinarily be classed as work under the woman's contract, for which she would be paid, but could be particularly useful in enabling a woman to attend a conference, undertake a training activity or attend a team meeting. Any work done at any stage during the maternity leave period will count as a whole keeping in touch day, up to the 10 day maximum. In other words, if an employee comes in for a one-hour training session and does no other work that day, she will have used one of her keeping in touch days. It should be noted that the salary paid for KIT days together with the Statutory Maternity Pay cannot exceed normal full pay. In addition if more than 10 KIT days are worked, then one weeks SMP will be lost for each week or part week that is worked under the contract. This also means that if you work your 10th KIT day and do a further days work in the same week, then SMP will be lost for that week, as the 10 day maximum would have been exceeded in that week.

Start of the Maternity Pay Period

The MPP may commence at any time from the start of the 11th week before the EWC at your discretion.

The actual date of the MPP depends on when you start your maternity leave as defined in the following table.

if you	the MPP will start on
work up to the birth	a date as notified by you
have the baby early	the day following the day on which childbirth occurs
are absent from work due to a pregnancy related reason after the beginning of the fourth week before the expected week of childbirth, but before the date you have notified	automatically on the day after the first day of absence that occurs within the four week period
are absent on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related	a date as notified by you

Statutory and Occupational Maternity Pay

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

All pregnant employees are entitled to 52 weeks statutory maternity leave, regardless of length of service

Eligibility for SMP

To be eligible for SMP you must:

- Have 26 weeks' service by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.
- Have average weekly earnings in the eight weeks prior to the qualifying week, not less than the National Insurance Contributions Lower Earnings Limit. If you do not meet this requirement then you will be provided with form SMP1 which details the reason for not paying you SMP. You may then be eligible to claim for Maternity Allowance from the Benefits Agency. Maternity Allowance is not paid through payroll but directly by the local Benefits Agency.
- Still be pregnant at the 11th week prior to the EWC, or have given birth by that time
- Give the Council at least 28 days notice of your intention to cease work. Within 28 days of receiving that notice, the Council must inform you of your expected date of return should you decide to take your full entitlement.

How is my entitlement to SMP worked Out

Your entitlement to SMP is worked out according to the gross earnings paid to you during a set period. This is usually the average earnings over the eight week period up to and including the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth.

Amounts of SMP

Level of SMP	When Payable	Amount Payable
Higher	The first six weeks of the MPP	90% of your average weekly earnings
Lower	For a further 33 weeks	Standard rate or at a rate equal to 90% of your average weekly earnings. You will get whichever rate is lower

Entitlement to Occupational Maternity Pay

- a) If you have one years service or more at the 11th week before the EWC and declare in writing that you intend to return to work following the period of maternity leave, you will be entitled under the occupational maternity scheme, to receive in addition to the 33 weeks at the lower rate of SMP, 12 weeks at half a weeks pay without deduction except by the extent to which the combined pay and SMP (or MA and any dependents allowances if the employee is not eligible for SMP) exceeds full pay. Alternatively the equivalent amount (i.e. 6 weeks pay) may be paid on any other mutually agreed distribution or you can receive the amount in full when you return to work after the maternity leave period.
- b) If you do not intend to return to work, payments will be restricted to SMP entitlements only.
- c) Payments made by the authority during maternity leave under a) above shall be made on the understanding that you will return to local authority employment for a period of at least three months (13 weeks), which may be varied by the local authority on good cause being shown and, in the event of you not doing so, shall refund the monies paid, or such part thereof, if any as the authority may decide. Payments made to you by way of SMP are not refundable.

Right to return to work

- a) Subject to (b) to return to work to the job in which you were employed under your original contract of employment and on terms and conditions not less favorable than those which would have been applicable to you if you had not been absent. "Job" for this purpose, means the nature of work which you are employed to do and the capacity and place which you are so employed.
- b) Where it is not practicable by reason of redundancy for the authority to permit your return to your job as defined in (a) above, you shall be entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy where one exists, provided that the work to be done in that post is suitable to you and appropriate to the circumstances, and that the capacity and place in which you are to be employed and your terms and conditions of employment are not substantially less favorable to you than if you had been able to return to the job in which you were originally employed.
- c) Suitable alternative employment may also be offered if exceptional circumstances other than redundancy (e.g. re-organisation), which would have occurred if you had not been absent, necessitate a change in the job in which you were employed prior to your absence. The work to be done should be suitable to you and appropriate to the circumstances and the capacity and place in which you are to be employed and your terms and conditions of employment should not be less favorable to you than if you had been able to return to the job in which you were originally employed.

Exercise of the Right to return to work

- d) Return before the end of the maternity period you must notify the Council, in writing, at least 21 days before the day on which you propose to return if this is before the end of the maternity period (ordinary or additional). Where the notice given is less than 21 days the Council may postpone your return to ensure 21 days notice, but not beyond the end of the maternity leave period.

All employees:

1. If you are unable to return on the expected day due to sickness the absence will be covered by the sickness scheme in the normal way.
2. If, because of an interruption of work (whether due to industrial action or some other reason), it is unreasonable to expect your return on the due date, you may instead return when work resumes, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Relationship with sickness and Annual Leave

- a) Maternity leave will not be treated as sick leave and will not therefore be taken into account for the calculation of the period of entitlement to sickness leave.
- b) Ordinary maternity leave and additional maternity leave shall be regarded as continuous service for the purposes of the National Joint Council's sickness and maternity schemes and annual leave. Annual leave continues to accrue during both ordinary and additional leave.

Pension Scheme Benefits

If you are a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme you will pay pension contributions on the whole period of paid maternity leave. The contributions will be based on the level of pay received but benefits will continue to accrue as if you were working normally on full pay. If you have a right to return to work, you can choose to pay any contributions for any period of unpaid maternity leave beyond the 26 weeks ordinary maternity period so that the period of absence will count in full for pension purposes. The contributions will be calculated on the rate of pay (or reduced pay) that you were receiving immediately before you commenced the period of unpaid maternity leave. The Corporate Human Resources Section will send you, on your return to work, the appropriate election form for completion and return.

If before going on maternity leave, you were paying additional contributions to increase your membership, these remain payable. They are calculated on the rate of pay you would have received if you were not on maternity leave. The additional membership continues to accrue in full.

Adoption Support Leave

When a child is first placed with a family, one of the adoptive parents is entitled to 52 weeks' statutory adoption leave (SAL) provided they meet certain eligibility criteria. This is in contrast to statutory maternity leave, where all female employees, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave.

SAL is made up of a 26 week ordinary adoption leave period, and a further 26 week additional adoption leave period.

UK Adoptions – Entitlement to Ordinary Adoption Leave

An employee has the right to take ordinary adoption leave when a newly adopted child is matched with them.

'Matching' takes place when an adoption agency decides that a person would make a suitable adoptive parent for the child, either individually or jointly with another person.

An employee is entitled to 26 weeks OAL (and 26 weeks' additional adoption leave see Entitlement to AAL) for the purpose of caring for their newly adopted child if all of the following conditions have been satisfied.

- They are the child's adopter

An adopter is a person who has been matched with the child, or in the case where two persons have been matched jointly, which ever of them has elected to be the child's adopter for the purpose of taking statutory adoption leave.

A child is a person who is or was, when placed with an adopter for adoption, under the age of 18.

- They have been continuously employed, for at least 26 weeks by the week during which they are notified of being matched with the child. An employee is notified of having been matched with a child on the date they receive notification of the agency's decision. (A week is a period of seven days beginning on Sunday.) Part-weeks of employment count as a full-week's employment for the purposes of calculating continuous employment.
- They have notified the agency:
 - That they agree for the child to be placed with them
 - On the date of placement
- They have complied with a request from their employer to produce evidence of their entitlement to OAL
- They have given notice in accordance with the notification requirements for taking OAL

If more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement, an employee is still only entitled to 26 weeks' OAL.

UK Adoptions – Evidence of Entitlement to OAL

An employee must give their employer a document issued by the matching adoption agency, containing:

1. The name and address of the agency
2. The date on which the employee was notified that they had been matched with the child
3. The date on which the agency expects to place the child with the employee.

UK Adoptions – Notification Requirements for Taking OAL

In order to satisfy the notification requirements for taking ordinary adoption leave, an employee must notify their employer, within seven days of being informed that they have been matched with the child:

1. The date on which the child is expected to be placed with the employee
2. The date on which they intend to begin their OAL.

UK Adoptions – Changing the Start Date of OAL

An employee may choose to start their OAL on:

1. The date on which the child is placed with them for adoption. If the employee is at work on this date, their OAL will begin on the following day
2. A predetermined date specified in notice to their employer that falls within the 14-day period immediately before the date of placement.

Overseas Adoptions – Entitlement to OAL

An employee is entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave (and 26 weeks' additional adoption leave see Entitlement to AAL) for the purpose of caring for a child adopted from overseas or supporting the child's adopter if all of the following conditions have been satisfied.

These conditions are that the employee:

1. Is the child's adopter. A child's adopter is a person who has been matched with the child for adoption or, in the case where two persons have been matched jointly, whichever of them has elected to be the child's adopter for the purpose of taking statutory adoption leave.
2. Has been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks either:
 - a. Ending with the week in which they receive official notification, or
 - b. Starting with the week in which their employment with the employer began

Official notification means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant domestic authority (e.g. the Secretary of State for Health), that it is prepared to issue a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of the child, or has issued a certificate and sent it to that authority confirming, in either case, that the adopter is eligible to adopt and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

Overseas Adoptions – Evidence of Entitlement to OAL

As proof of their entitlement to ordinary adoption leave, an employee must give their employers a copy of the official notification together with evidence of the date of entry of the child into Great Britain

Overseas Adoptions – Notification Requirement for Taking OAL

In order to satisfy the notification requirements for taking ordinary adoption leave for a child adopted from overseas, an employee must notify their employer of

1. The date on which they receive an official notification. This must be given either:
 - a. Within 28 days of the date they received an official notification ,
or
 - b. On the date on which they complete 26 weeks' continuous employment with the employer whichever is later
2. The date on which the child is expected to enter the UK. This must be given either:
 - a. Within 28 days of the date they received an official notification,
or
 - b. On the date on which they complete 26 weeks' continuous employment with the employer whichever is later.
3. The date on which they wish to begin their OAL. This must be given at least 28 days before the expected start date for OAL.
4. The date on which the child actually enters Great Britain. This must be given no more than 28 days after the date of entry into Great Britain.

Overseas Adoptions – When OAL can Begin?

An employee may choose to start their OAL for a child adopted from overseas on:

1. The date on which the child enters Great Britain
2. A predetermined date specified in their notice under the notification requirements for OAL for a child adopted from overseas that is not later than 28 days after the date on which the child enters Great Britain.

Overseas Adoptions – Changing the Start Date of OAL

An employee who has already notified their employer of the date on which they intend to begin their ordinary adoption leave may change that date provided they give their employer notice:

1. Where the change is to provide for the employee's OAL to begin on the date on which the child enters Great Britain, at least 28 days before the date specified in their notice as the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain
2. Where the change is to provide for the employee's OAL to begin on a predetermined date, at least 28 days before that date.

Length of OAL where the adoption has been disrupted

Where the adoption is disrupted or fails to take place, the employee's OAL will end eight weeks after the end of the week in which the disruption occurred.

A disruption will occur in the following circumstances

1. The employee is notified, before the placement, that it will not now occur
2. The child dies
3. The child is returned to the adoption agency
4. The child ceases to live with the adopter

Pension Contributions during OAL

Pension contributions during OAL will be paid as per section on Pension Contributions during Occupational Maternity Leave.

Reasonable Contact during Adoption Leave

The employer and the employee are entitled to make reasonable contact with each other while the employee is on adoption leave.

For example, the employer may contact the employee to discuss whether or not their planned date of return to work has changed or is likely to do so or to discuss any flexible working arrangements that would make their return to work easier.

Keeping in Touch days

The employee may work for their employer during their adoption leave period for up to ten days without bringing their adoption leave to an end. Please refer to section "Keeping in Touch days" within the Maternity section of this policy.

Additional Adoption Leave (AAL)

Additional adoption Leave is a period of 26 weeks' leave beginning on the day after the last day of the employees ordinary adoption leave.

Statutory Adoption Pay

Statutory Adoption Pay is paid at the same rate as Maternity Pay.

39 weeks @ Statutory Adoption Pay

13 weeks unpaid

Occupational Adoption Pay as agreed by Ceredigion County Council will be paid at a rate of 12 weeks @ ½ pay.

Paternity Leave

Following the birth of a child, or placement of a child for adoption paternity leave and pay will give eligible employees the right to take paid leave to care for the child or support the mother/adopter.

Eligibility

Employees must satisfy the following conditions in order to qualify for paternity leave. They must:

- ❖ Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing, and
- ❖ Be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner;
or
- Be the adopter's spouse or partner and
- ❖ Have worked continuously for their employer for 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the baby is due

Length of Paternity Leave

Eligible employees can take one or two (consecutive) whole weeks paternity leave (but not two separate weeks)

They can choose to start their leave:

- ❖ From the date of the child's birth/placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected), or
- ❖ From a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's birth/placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or
- ❖ From a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which the baby is expected to be born

Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth/placement but must be completed:

- ❖ Within 56 days of the actual date of birth/placement of the child, or
- ❖ If the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 days after the first day of the expected week of birth

Only one period of leave is available to employees irrespective of whether more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy.

Paternity Pay

During paternity leave, most employees are entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay from their employer.

Ceredigion County Council will pay the employee full pay for the first week and Statutory Paternity Pay for the second week.

Employees who have average weekly earnings below the Lower Earning Limit for National Insurance purposes do not qualify for SPP. Employees who do not qualify for SPP, or who are normally low-paid, may be able to get income

support while on paternity leave. Please contact Payroll section for relevant Inland Revenue form.

Notice of intention to take Paternity Leave

Employees must inform their line manager in writing, on the approved application form, of their intention to take paternity leave by the end of the fifteenth week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You can change your mind, but you must give your line manager 28 days' notice of the dates. If you do change your mind, a new application form must be completed.

Notice of intention to take Paternity Adoption Support Leave

Employees must notify their line manager in writing, on the approved application form, of their intention to take paternity leave within 7 days of the adopter being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Parental Leave

What is Parental Leave?

Parental Leave is the right to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments. The leave is unpaid.

Parental leave must be to care for a child.

Who can take parental leave?

Employees who have a baby or adopt a child on or after 15th December 1999 and who have completed one year's qualifying service with their employer by the time they want to take leave. Both mothers and fathers can take parental leave.

How long does parental leave last?

Employees get 13 weeks in total for each child (proportionately reduced for part-timers). Employees will be able to take parental leave in short or long blocks depending on what has been agreed where they work.

What happens if an employee has twins?

Parental leave is for each child, so if twins are born each parent will get 13 weeks leave for each child.

When does parental leave to be taken by?

Employees can choose parental leave at any time:-

- Up until the child's sixth birthday
- In adoption cases, for five years after the child is first placed with the family for adoption (or until the child's 18th birthday if that comes sooner)
- In the case of a child with a disability, up until the child's 18th birthday (for the purpose of parental leave, a disabled child is one for whom disability living allowance has been awarded)

Will employees be able to return to the same job after parental leave?

At the end of parental leave, an employee is guaranteed the right to return to the same job before if the leave was for a period of 4 weeks or less: if it was for a longer period the employee is entitled to return to the same job, or, if that is not reasonably practicable, a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job.

When parental leave follows maternity leave, the general rule is that a woman is entitled to return to the same job she had before the leave. If at the end of additional maternity leave, this would not be reasonably practicable, and it is still not reasonably practicable at the end of parental leave, she is entitled to return to a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job.

Does the Council need to keep records?

The Council will keep records of parental leave taken, When an employee changes jobs, the Council/departments will be free to make enquiries of a previous employers/departments or seek a declaration from the employee about how much parental leave he or she has taken.

Can the Council ask for evidence to confirm the employee is entitled to parental leave?

The Council can ask to see evidence to confirm the employee is the parent or the person who is legally responsible for the child; evidence might take form of information contained in the child's birth certificate, papers confirming a child's adoption or the date of placement in adoption cases, or in the case of a disabled child, the award of disability living allowance for the child. The Council's request must be reasonable; it may not be reasonable for the Council to check on the employee's entitlement on every occasion on which leave is asked for.

What if the Council refuses to allow an employee to take parental leave?

Employees will have the right to go to an employment tribunal if the employer prevents or attempts to prevent them from taking parental leave. An employee who takes parental leave will also be protected from victimisation, including dismissal, for taking it.

Parental Leave Procedure

- Applications for parental leave must be made using the approved application form (see appendix **)
- Leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week with the exception that parents of disabled children can take leave in blocks or multiples of one day.
- In all cases a maximum of 4 week parental leave in any one financial year can be taken in respect of any individual child.
- Request for leave can be refused/postponed for up to 6 months where the work of the department/section would be particularly disrupted if the leave were taken at that time (postponing leave may be justified when, for example, the work is at a seasonal peak; where a significant number of the workforce applies for parental leave at the same time; or; when the employee's role is such that his or her absence at a particular time would be harmful to the department/section. This however does not apply if the employee gives notice to take the leave immediately after the time the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption)
- Employees applying for parental leave must provide evidence that he/she is the parent or the person who is legally responsible for the child.
- An employee needs to give at least 21 days' or as many days as is reasonably practical notice to his or her employer, giving the dates when the leave is to start and finish.

Time off for Dependants

The Employment Relations Act 1999 also provides employees with the right, regardless of service, to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work to deal with sudden emergencies and to make any necessary longer term arrangements. The emergency must involve a dependant of the employee. The right does not include an entitlement to pay. However, the Authority does operate special leave that allows employees in special circumstances to paid leave.

The meaning of dependant

Dependant is defined as: a spouse or cohabite, child, parent and, for the purposes of the first 3 items listed below, anyone who relies on the employee for help or to make arrangements (e.g. someone other than a lodger, tenant, employee or boarder who lives in the same household as the employee). The Act provides a further category of dependant: any person who reasonably relies on the employee either for assistance if the person falls ill, is injured or assaulted, or to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury.

Entitlement to time off for dependant

The right exists in the following circumstances:

1. to help when dependant is ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
2. to arrange for an ill or injured dependant to be cared for;
3. because a dependant's care arrangements are unexpectedly changed;
4. as a result of the death of a dependant
5. to deal with an incident involving a child which occurs unexpectedly in school time

Extent of time off for dependants

No limit has been set in the legislation. The operative word used by the Act is 'reasonable'. The amount of time off will vary according to the circumstances of the emergency. The Government has stated that one or two days should be sufficient to deal with most problems.

Notification

Employees are required to tell the Authority as soon as possible that they need the time off – and the likely duration.

Compassionate Leave and other Special Leave

The Council recognises that there are occasions/times when a short period of time off is necessary outside of leave entitlement and will endeavour to support staff in balancing their work and personal circumstances. The Compassionate and other leave section of this policy apply to all employees regardless of their position, job status or length of term of employment.

Reason for Leave	Days Allowable	Further Details	Authority to Approve
Compassionate Leave			
<p>Death of a member of your Immediate Family or Dependant</p>	<p>Up to 7 working days paid leave per occasion.</p> <p>A maximum of 12 weeks unpaid in any twelve month rolling period.</p> <p>For periods of more than 12 weeks approval must be given by the Director in consultation with the Personnel Officer and relevant Cabinet member.</p>	<p>Compassionate Leave with pay should be granted to the employee who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ is a close relative of, and resides in the same house as, a deceased person (parent, partner, spouse or child, brother, sister, step brother or step sister, step son, step daughter, step mother or step father) – the special leave to be from and including the date of death up to and including the date of interment; or ❖ is a close relative of, and resides in the same house as, a deceased person (other than parent, partner, spouse or child brother, sister, step brother or step sister, step son, step daughter, step mother or step father) special leave to be for a period to be determined according to the circumstances of the case. ❖ Suffers bereavement by the death of a close relative, not residing in the same house – the period of special leave to be determined according to the circumstances of the case. “close relative is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Parents b) Siblings c) Children d) Parent, children or siblings of spouse or partner e) Grandparents <p>Anyone who acts in the capacity of a close relative and who is solely responsible for arranging a funeral shall qualify for the same entitlement as a close relative.</p>	<p>Chief Officer or Assistant Director to authorise</p>

		<p>The “period of Compassionate leave” to be determined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One day’s paid leave if you have to attend the funeral of a close relative which is taking place locally • Two days paid leave if you have to travel some distance to attend the funeral of a close relative • Three days paid leave if you have to arrange the funeral or deal with the affairs of the deceased, as well as attend the funeral • Five days paid leave if you have to arrange the funeral and deal with the affairs of the deceased as well as attend the funeral. 	
Compassionate Leave – Serious Illnesses			
<p>Compassionate Leave Serious Illness – immediate family & Dependants</p>	<p>Up to 7 working days paid leave per occasion</p> <p>A maximum of 12 weeks unpaid in any twelve month period.</p> <p>For periods of more than 12 weeks approval must be given by the Director in consultation with the Corporate Human Resource Officer and relevant Cabinet member.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A member of the immediate family is taken seriously ill and requires hospitalisation <p>“taken seriously ill is defined as sudden illness or injury in emergency type situations which are unlikely to have been foreseen or planned.</p> <p>“immediate family” is defined as parent, child, spouse or partner or parent / child of spouse or partner</p>	<p>Chief Officer or Assistant Director to authorise</p>
Funerals			
<p>Funerals</p>	<p>Day/time of Funeral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Attends a funeral as a representative of the County Council or a recognised Trade Union. ❖ Paid leave for attendance at funerals be given in reasonable circumstances ❖ Attends a funeral of a work colleague <p>“Reasonable circumstances” is defined as circumstances where the deceased’s relationship with you, whilst not being classed as “close relative” is such that they were</p>	<p>Chief Officer or Assistant Director to authorise all requests</p>

		either dependant on you or that they fulfilled one of the above roles in your life.	
<i>Time granted from Work for Public Duties</i>			
Time off for attendance in Court	Time off without pay will be granted	No paid time off will be granted for attendance in Court or tribunal unless it is within the role of their work. Annual leave or unpaid leave should be taken.	On application to the Director or representative
Time off for attendance at Governing Bodies	Time off with pay to attend a maximum of 6 meetings of Governing bodies per annum		On application to the Director or representative
Magistrates and Members of Local Authorities	Up to 18 days per annum with pay, or 36 half days less the maximum amount of any attendance allowance or loss of earnings allowance which may be receivable. Leave of absence for a period of less than half a day may be granted to officers who are Members of County Councils (not magistrates). In this case, the amount of leave taken will be aggregated in blocks of three hours and equivalent session of attendance allowance will be deducted from the officer's salary for each such 3 hour period. Similarly, each period of 3 hours will count as a half day's leave.		On application to the Director or representative
Jury Service	Time off with pay less the officers entitlement to	Jury service is compulsory. Service needs can only be considered in exceptional circumstances	On application to Director or nominated

	financial loss allowances		representative
Service in Non-regular Forces	Up to 2 weeks leave with pay for officers required to attend annual camp of the Territorial Army, Volunteer Reserve etc		On application to Director or nominated representatives
Emergency and Rescue Services	Time off will be granted with pay to attend call outs during working hours. Employees must ensure adequate cover prior to attending the emergency call out otherwise payment will be withheld.	Employees of the emergency and Rescue services will be allowed up to ten days training per year.	Directors needs to be notified if the employee is a member of the Emergency and Rescue Service
<i>Other Special Leave</i>			
Time off for interviews	Reasonable time off with pay will be granted for interviews within Local Authorities	Annual Leave or flexi requests should be made for interviews outside of Local Authorities. All leave requests made are subject to service requirements. No travel time will be granted only the time/ day of the interview.	On application to Director or nominated representatives .
Time off for IVF treatment	Time off with pay to attend appointments for one cycle of treatment	Additional cycles to be taken using annual leave or flexi leave. All requests are subject to service requirements.	On application to Director or nominated representatives .
Special Leave for Employees to represent the Country at sporting, charitable or other events	Applications for special leave for representation of sport, charitable or other events at National Level up to 5 days with pay.	All applications should be submitted to Corporate Human Resources prior to the event for Approval	CMT Decision via Corporate Human Resources Section.

Religious & Cultural Observation Leave for religious purposes such as festivals etc. This may include time off during the working day for prayer and/or fasting	Annual Leave, flexible working hours or unpaid leave should be considered depending on the circumstances	Please discuss with your line manager	For those of the Christian faith holidays are included within the existing statutory leave provision entitlement – such as Good Friday, Easter & Christmas. If you have a faith other than Christianity, you may wish to discuss your requirements for time off to observe religious festivals, with your manager.
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Flexible Working

All flexible working arrangements must be approved by your Chief Officer prior to the change in your working patterns. The County Council will try and accommodate all requests however, it must be understood that service provision is paramount and the decision will be based on the needs and requirements of the service and the request made by the employee. The arrangements should be subject to review by the employee and employer as appropriate.

The statutory right to request to work flexibly, which came into force on 6 April 2003, gives parents the right to request to work flexibly and is available to employees who have children under six (or 18 in the case of a disabled child). However, the employee must also have 26 weeks' continuous service within Local Government, and have responsibility for bringing up the child. The employee may request to change their hours, times or location.

This has recently been extended and April 2007 saw the launch of The Work and Families Act 2006 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 which will give working carers rights to help them manage work and caring including the right to request flexible work and leave entitlement.

The act defines a carer as **someone who cares for, or expects to care for, a husband, wife or partner, a relative such as a child, uncle, sister, parent-in-law, son-in-law or grandparent, or someone who falls into neither category but lives at the same address as the carer.**

An application can be refused only where there is a clear business reason. The business ground(s) for refusing an application must be from one of those listed below.

Business grounds for refusing a request

Burden of additional costs.
Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
Inability to re-organise work among existing staff.
Inability to recruit additional staff.
Detrimental impact on quality.
Detrimental impact on performance.
Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work.
Planned structural changes.

Flexible Working Patterns

Flexible Working patterns can allow employees to manage both work and their caring responsibility. Flexible working could include the following as is available to all employees of Ceredigion County Council

Part-time working

Employees are contracted to work for fewer hours than the normal basic full-time hours in the business

Benefits

- ❖ Gives better flexibility for employers to cover during peaks and staff absence
- ❖ Retention of skilled workers who are unable to continue full-time and may otherwise have to leave
- ❖ Attracts a wider pool of potential recruits, particularly women returning from maternity leave
- ❖ Creates greater choice for employers and employees

Job Sharing

Where two or more people share one full-time job, splitting the pay, holidays and other benefits between them according to the hours worked

Benefits

- ❖ Increased flexibility to meet demand if both job sharers agree to be available when workloads are heavy
- ❖ Greater continuity as they are able to cover half the work

- ❖ More people to do the job brings an increase in skills, experience, views and ideas to the post
- ❖ Retains and attracts skilled staff and is a popular option for mothers returning to work from maternity leave.

Flexitime

Employees **following discussion with their manager** can choose, within set limits, when to begin and end work. Employees must work an agreed number of hours in a set accounting period (eight weeks) and during set down hours in the day (core hours)

Taking into account the minimum and maximum lunch breaks, start and finishing times, the hours are then recorded and added up at the end of the eight weeks. (see section below on Flexi time)

Within agreed limits, employees are able to carry over any excess or deficit into the next period. Additional hours are then taken as time off.

Benefits

- ❖ Offers more choice of hours to work to potential recruits and aids retention of existing staff
- ❖ Gives employers better flexibility to manage workloads and reduce the need for overtime
- ❖ Promotes equal opportunity for those staff unable to work the standard hours
- ❖ Helps employees to organise work and home more easily and helps to reduce their stress
- ❖ Allows businesses to extend their opening times and be more available to their customers
- ❖ Gives employees greater flexibility who have travel or other domestic problems

Annualised hours

Employee hours are worked out for the year in two parts. Agreed set shifts (major part) and unallocated hours Pay is set at a regular guaranteed monthly sum and the hours kept in reserve are owed to the company. This enables the employer to ask employees to come in at short notice to cover for colleagues and cope with demand.

Benefits

- ❖ Can reduce hours and overtime. Helps the Council improve its productivity and efficiency by making better use of staff resources to meet customer demands.
- ❖ Helps employees to arrange their working times around domestic responsibilities

Term-time working

An arrangement that gives employees the opportunity to reduce their hours or take time off during school holidays

Benefits

- ❖ Solves problems of childcare for parents
- ❖ Employers can plan ahead to cover absence

Voluntary reduced working time

Employee's basic hours are reduced for a short period with the agreement of the employer. The employee may then return to take up their previous full-time hours.

Benefits

- ❖ Provides employees with more freedom to respond to Domestic responsibilities

Compressed Working Weeks

Compressed working weeks are when the work time is reallocated into fewer and longer periods during the week. This may include reorganising the basic hours normally worked over five days into either a period of four and a half days or nine days over a period of ten days

Benefits

- ❖ Helps employers to recruit and retain skilled people
- ❖ Can help to reduce overtime payments
- ❖ May offer some businesses greater flexibility to manage their workloads
- ❖ Provides employees with more flexibility to manage their work and home life

Flexi-time Scheme

The Councils' Flexitime Scheme is a key component in improving Work Life Balance. We hope that employees will use it to more effectively manage their work and personal lives.

The success of the Scheme depends entirely on the common sense and goodwill of employees and must operate according to the demands of the service. The demands of the service must always take precedence and you must seek approval from your line manager before taking any flexi leave. The Scheme is a discretionary benefit, which is offered to all employees whose working arrangements allow an element of flexibility and therefore, may not be suitable for workers whose duties require a fixed working pattern. Nothing in the Scheme should be interpreted as providing any employee with

a contractual right to flexitime. It is however anticipated that, successfully introduced, both the organisation and staff will obtain significant mutual benefit from the scheme.

Time off for Medical and Related Appointments

The Flexitime scheme is intended to increase the scope for staff to work flexibly to a degree where, under most circumstances appointments can be taken in an employee's own time however, in those circumstances where appointments cannot be undertaken outside normal working hours then a period of up to two hours will be allowed for routine medical appointments – i.e Doctors etc. Additional hours will be debited from flexi sheet. Where possible employees must ensure that if appointments cannot be made outside normal working hours then employees should endeavour to make appointments before 11.00am or after 3.00pm.

Hospital appointments will be with pay on receipt of a hospital appointment card of letter. If confidentiality is required please contact the Corporate Human Resources Section.

Abuse of the Scheme

Abuse of this scheme may lead to disciplinary action and to the withdrawal of the flexitime benefit to the employee.

Scheme Parameters

General Principles

The normal working hours for a Full Time Equivalent employee is 8:45 – 13:00 13:45 – 17:00 (Monday to Thursday) and 8:45 – 13:00, 13:45 – 16:30 on Friday) Any requests for flexitime working outside your normal working hours to your post **must be agreed by the line manager in advance**. This would quite reasonably include negotiation for a degree of flexibility within which an individual or team could work without having to gain prior approval on each occasion.

On every working day, a minimum of 4 hours work must be completed, to include at least 2 hour of work before 1:00pm and 2 hours of work after 1:00pm. Where a half day flexitime leave has been agreed, each employee must complete at least 2 hours work before 1:00pm in the case of afternoon leave and at least 2 hours or work after 1:00pm in the case of morning leave. For example, you could work from 9am to 11am and 1pm to 3pm without having to book flexitime leave.

No more than 6 hours must be worked without a break of at least half an hour.

Employee must record any breaks i.e. cigarette breaks, breakfast breaks etc on their flexi sheets.

Bandwidth

The Bandwidth runs from 7:30am to 7:00pm

Accounting Period

The Accounting period is 8 weeks and based on full time contracted working hours of 296 over that period and pro rata for part time.

Credit/Debit Hours and Carry Over

A maximum 16 hours credit or 8 hours debit can be carried over from one accounting period to the next. Any hours in excess of 16 hours will be lost at the end of an accounting period. If more than 8 hours debit is accrued without reasonable prior arrangement, then the disciplinary procedure may apply. For part time employees the maximum credit and debit will be on a pro-rata basis depending on the hours employed to work.

Flexible hours Leave

Up to 2 full or 4 half days flexi leave during each accounting period may be taken by agreement with your line manager. Flexi leave cannot be taken if it results in a debit of more than 8 hours.

Overtime

All paid overtime must be done at the prior request of the line manager/supervisor.

Home Working

Figures from the Office of National Statistics published in October 2005 suggest that the number of people working from home had increased from 2.3 million in the spring of 1997 to 3.1 million by the spring of 2005. The report noted that while the number of people working from home exclusively is comparatively low, the number of people who do so for some of the working week is on the increase.

By allowing more flexible ways of working it can increase employment opportunities, particularly for those with families or who have long journeys to work. In turn this can ease pressure on infrastructure, facilitate regional development and help employees improve the balance between work and home life.

Home working will be subject to an agreement between the employer and the employee. A review of the working practice should be carried out on a 6 monthly basis. It is recommended that a trial period is set up in order to ensure that the employee and employer are content with the arrangement.

Designated Home Workers

The following are defined as home workers:

- ❖ Employees who have an agreed contract to work from home;
- ❖ Employees who's main place of work is in the home;
- ❖ Mobile employees who are not office-based, are out on site for most of the day and connect from the home to record their work, pick up e-mails, work

etc. This could include Social Care workers, Highways inspectors, Mobile Library officers etc

Occasional home workers

Employees who have a permanent office place (including hot desking) and work most of the working week in an office environment. They may occasionally work from home during the day, evenings or weekends. Should this pattern become regular, consideration should be made to amend contract details to include change of base of work and the associated Health and Safety requirements.

Inclement Weather

Unless the employee is a designated home worker, home working is not available to employees during any period of Inclement Weather.

Tele-Working

Tele-working provides the technical requirements for home working and is a major enabler of home working. It can provide a range of opportunities for simple “stand alone” functionality to high speed interactivity with the Council's corporate and directorate systems providing an office environment at home. Each variation has different implications in terms of cost and complexity.

Tele-working is a major enabler of any Council's commitment to home working. It has the potential to realise cost savings to the Council and to employees. In addition, it contributes significantly to the national and local e-government initiative and to e-commerce

3. ARRANGEMENTS

There are a number of issues for consideration in relation to home working :

- ❖ contractual arrangements for distant workers;
- ❖ health and safety arrangements;
- ❖ furniture, equipment and computer and communications provision;
- ❖ systems issues, (e.g. remote access to Council databases);
- ❖ information security, Data Protection Act and ICT Security;
- ❖ expenses and allowances (e.g. for home heating and lighting);
- ❖ taxation;
- ❖ human resources, recruitment, training and career progression;
- ❖ personal support, e.g. potential for home worker to become isolated;

Home working does not have to be an all or nothing option i.e. it will not suit everyone and could be mix of office working and home working. Line Managers will have to break jobs down into individual tasks to establish what needs to be done in the office and what can be done from home before deciding if a post is suitable for home-working.

There are difficulties in managing a remote home work force that include ensuring work is being done and loss of team feeling and communication

issues. Training of managers will be required to enable them to effectively manage and monitor remote workers. Other measures will include regular meetings, video conferencing, hot-desking and team briefing etc.

“Work is an activity not a place” and there is a need to balance the need of the individual employee with the need of the organisation.

Home working should not be seen as purely an ICT project as the technical ICT issues are relatively easy to establish in equipment and requirements for telephone and data connection. It is effectively a business initiative and will involve many disciplines including Corporate Human Resources, health and safety, union representation and senior managers. Particular advice will be needed on contractual and confidentiality issues.

Health & Safety

The Council must take all reasonable care for the health, safety and wellbeing of its workforce and that of others who may be affected by work activities. All employees must comply with the health and safety requirements identified in respect of home working.

Each Department is responsible for ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Home workers will be provided with training to ensure that they are competent to carry out a self-assessment of the risks from work activities carried out in their home. The department will carry out the initial risk assessment. These assessments will be reviewed periodically by the appropriate line manager.

Risk assessments relating to new or expectant mothers (those pregnant, those who have given birth in the last 6 months, or those still breast-feeding) should also be undertaken, and must take account of risks to the child.

All electrical equipment provided by the Council will comply with existing safety regulations and this will be confirmed by the home workers Line Manager.

The domestic electrical system is the responsibility of the home worker (employee). This will be considered under the risk assessment and advice will be sought from the Corporate Health and Safety Unit.

In order to verify that the applicable health and safety provisions are correctly applied, the Line Manager, Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) will have access to the employees' homes within the limits of national legislation and collective agreements. Such access is subject to prior notification and with the employee's agreement. The employee is also entitled to request inspection visits. The frequency of these visits will depend on the level of risk.

ICT arrangements

Ordering and installation of any equipment will only take place once appropriate line management issues and workstation assessments and control measures have been completed and implemented. ICT facilities will only be initiated once a specific request is made by departmental managers by e-mail with appropriate information on location, equipment requirements, access details, etc.

Only Council-provided equipment will be used for any home-working. No personally owned PC, laptop, printer or other equipment is to be used without prior agreement with the Corporate ICT section.

Home Connection must only be provided, configured, implemented and supported by Corporate ICT section. All requests must be made via e-mail with adequate notice and with appropriate cost centre code provided for recharge of ICT costs in equipment & communications.

ICT Section will arrange the provision of a broadband ADSL link to a staff member's home. ADSL Broadband link is subject to availability in distance from a local telephone exchange and may not be available in some more rural areas.

All ICT equipment will be procured and provided by the ICT Section on receipt of the appropriate budget code and will consist of :

- broadband router (with remote access);
- thin Station where no data information is to be stored locally;
- where justified laptop computers may be provided;
- screen, keyboard and mouse;
- small laser B&W printer;
- voice over IP telephone;

All faults must be reported directly to the Helpdesk. Remote diagnostics will be carried out before a home visit is arranged.

Designated home workers should undertake formal ICT training, in order to have better understanding of ICT issues and to be more self-sufficient in dealing with ICT issues with remote ICT Section support.

Any home working user is bound by the requirements set out in the ICT Security Policy especially regarding Telephone, E-mail and Internet usage, Data Protection & other security issues.

Tele-working staff turnover may present increased overheads due to the installation of new communication lines and desktop equipment into a range of facilities, and especially with on-going ICT support with additional locations to service.

Lead in time and costs of installation and de-installation of lines could cause delays in staff being able to start work.

Desk Top

Suitable office space with both power outlets and a telephone connection will be required. The line manager will arrange regular testing to meet electrical safety regulations. The home worker will be liable for losses of Council property due to negligence.

Network & Telephony Connections

Normally only ADSL broadband connection will be used by a Council-provided ADSL link. Availability is subject to BT and the distance from the local exchange and the quality of any signal. ICT Section will arrange installation with telecommunications provider.

Back up facilities

Teleworkers may not be restricted to traditional office hours. This could involve a move towards 24x7 working in order to introduce the advantage of flexibility. Teleworkers would need to back-up data held on laptops regularly.

ICT Support

Currently, ICT support will only be available in normal office hours 9am-5pm Monday to Friday or as per Departmental ICT Service Level Agreements. If home working means that ICT staff are expected to support users outside of normal office hours, then the levels of support provided by ICT will need to be reviewed. Support would also be required for Libraries, Leisure Centres and Members who are all dependent on ICT and using systems in the evenings and on weekends. Future changes could require an extended ICT support presence with the associated capital and revenue costs. There will be a key demand to retain and provide specialist skills. If ICT staff are required to provide support at home this will significantly increase travelling time and costs.

Network availability

Hours of working are subject to ICT availability. Wherever possible the home worker will be advised in advance of system availability and disruption will be kept to a minimum.

Where the system is unavailable during normal office hours when the home worker is due to be working this will count towards working hours, however the home worker must remain available to resume work as soon as the system becomes available.

If there is disruption to the network connection to the home worker's home he/she may be required to attend the office.

Security

By locating workstations and providing access to corporate systems from home, security is weakened and there is an increased risk of unauthorised access and/or disclosure of information. Formal training and adherence to the ICT Security Policy will be required.

Those at home are more prone to theft in general and specifically in terms of lost data. Automatic logging off features would operate in both a tele and office working as security is a real risk given the sensitivity of data held by some specific areas within the Council.

DUTIES

Working hours and attendance at the office

This policy will provide maximum flexibility within the service provision framework. It will be necessary however for the employee to agree working patterns in advance with their line manager.

Home workers will be required to attend the office for regular meetings, training and for one to one sessions. These will be planned in advance by the line manager.

Communication and support structure

Effective communication is vital to successful remote-working. Before home working commences the line manager will discuss, with the home worker, the following arrangements:

- how day to day communication will take place e.g. e-mail, telephone;
- times you are available for contact;
- access to support i.e. names and telephone numbers;
- reporting procedures ;
- office attendance for training, team meeting, one to ones etc.
- completion of flexi / leave sheets;
- working hours;

Disputes

If the home worker is dissatisfied with the arrangements made for communication and support they should raise this initially with their line manager. If the concern remains unresolved the normal grievance procedural arrangements will apply.

Monitoring of work performance

While the home working scheme is based on trust, there will be a higher level of electronic monitoring for remote workers than for office based staff. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of home working productivity will be monitored.

Privacy and access to the home

The Council will respect the home workers privacy outside of normal working hours. However, home workers are required to allow Council staff or approved representatives access to their homes for reasons relating to remote-working (health and safety inspections of the workplace and any computer maintenance required.). These visits will be during normal working hours and wherever possible prior notice will be given. Contact may be required outside of normal working hours only in exceptional circumstances.

In the event that the home working finishing the home worker will cooperate to enable the Council's equipment to be recovered.

Training

Employees will be required to attend any necessary training prior to beginning the home working , including health and safety training.

Home workers will have the same access to training as office based staff and will attend a designated building for training and development activities. This attendance may be additional to the normal requirements to attend the office at the agreed intervals.

Reporting sickness

The normal sickness reporting procedure will apply:

- employee must ring the line manager as soon as possible on the first day that you are unavailable for work;
- on the first day that you return to work, you must ring your line manager as soon as you start work and complete the appropriate forms;

The normal sickness procedure applies as detailed within the Council's Sickness Absence Policy.

Reporting accidents

All incidents must be reported, following the reporting procedure and using the IR1 Report Form.

Provision of equipment

The Council will where necessary provide a suitable desk, lighting, chair. The Council will provide a PC, telephone and communications link for the home

worker to work at home. No personal equipment can be used to access the Council's network or be used for Council purposes.

Home working arrangements of any kind, where connection to the Council's network is required, will only be allowed if Council owned and maintained equipment is used.

All equipment or connections will remain the property of the Council and will be inspected, replaced or upgraded at appropriate intervals. ICT equipment must be installed and maintained by ICT approved technicians.

Employees must take reasonable care of the Council's equipment and report any loss or damage immediately to their line manager and ICT.

Use of e-mail, internet, network services, telephones, computer hardware and software

Home workers must comply with Ceredigion County Council's ICT policies, especially the Information Security Policy, this provides overall ICT security and specific guidelines on email and Internet usage.

Misuse of Council equipment or ICT systems may result in disciplinary action and the home-working facility may be suspended. The home worker may be required to return to work at the office base immediately in these circumstances.

Data protection and ICT security

Employees must comply with the Data Protection Acts at all times and protect Council ICT systems from unauthorised access.

Guidelines for the personal use of Council's equipment by home workers

The Council permits limited and legitimate private use of internet/email facilities on the PC so long as this private use is not significant, is in accordance with the Council's policy/guidelines and is at no cost to the Council. Private use is any use other than use for performing the employee's duties. The use of equipment will be monitored for compliance with the Council's policy/guidelines and to determine the extent of personal use. Use of equipment by other family members is not permitted under any circumstance.

Informing third parties

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they carry out the following:

- inform the company that insures their home;
- inform the supplier(s) of utilities that they will be working from home;

- if applicable inform the mortgage provider;
- check that there are no planning restrictions or covenants;
- check, if applicable, that any allows work from home.

Structural alterations

It is recommended that employees do not make any structural alterations to their home purely for the purposes of working from home for the Council.

However if they do they are advised:

- that the Council will not be liable for any cost implications;
- if structural alterations are carried out they may be liable for non-domestic rates, capital gains tax etc.

Responsibility for additional costs

The Council will not pay for any additional costs associated with remote-working e.g. heating and lighting.

Costs associated with a business contingency response

Additional funding will be considered where home working is the result of implementing a business contingency plan.

Insurance

When working at home the employee is covered by the Council's insurance policy for employer's liability and personal accidents. All Council supplied equipment, other than furniture, is covered by the Council's insurance.

TERMINATION OF HOME WORKING

Organisational reasons

The Council reserves the right to terminate the facility to work from home. This could be due to changes in work location, changes in technology etc or other service reasons that result in home working no longer being a viable. At least one months notice will be given of the requirement to return to office based work for organisational reasons.

Employee health

Where concerns arise that employee health is being affected it may be necessary to suspend or terminate home-working.

Disciplinary reasons

If home working is withdrawn as a result of a disciplinary concern, then the provisions of the Council's agreed Disciplinary Procedure will apply and no notice may be given. The right of appeal against such a decision is provided for the home worker within the Disciplinary Procedure.

Capability & attendance reasons

Where there is concern about the capability or attendance the home working may be temporarily suspended to enable the line manager to provide further training /evaluation at the office.

The home worker will be given a reasonable period of notice to make any necessary caring arrangements etc. Where concerns continue remote-working may be terminated.

Change of address

The agreement to homework will be automatically terminated if there is a change of address as there is no automatic right to continue remote-working at a new address. The premises will be assessed to determine its suitability for home working.

Promotion/change of post

There is no right to continue remote-working in the event of a change of post. The remote-working only applies to the post that is currently held.

Applying for other posts will be on the basis of the hours and conditions of service stated in the advertisement.

Contingency business plan

Where the circumstances that required home working have been rectified, employees will return to their working arrangements prior to the business contingency plan.

Trade Union accompaniment and representation

Trade Union accompaniment and representation arrangements will continue to apply as for office-based staff.

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures remain the same as office based staff.

Annual Leave Entitlements

Paid annual leave entitlement for full-time employees' (part time employees' annual leave is calculated pro-rata to that of full-time employees')

Employees with up to 5 year years service at the start of the leave year = 26 days

Employees with 5 or more years continuous service at the start of the leave year = 30 days

Plus:

After 15 but less than 20 years continuous service = 1 additional day
Plus a further 1 day additional leave for each additional 5 year period of continuous service thereafter.

Service Provision

Services must ensure that there is adequate provision during the working date including lunch time to enable the service to operate.

Further Information

For further information with regards to any of the above topics, please contact the Corporate Human Resources Department.