

Integrated Impact Assessment

The purpose of Aberdeen City Council is to protect the people and the place of Aberdeen from harm, enabling them to prosper and supporting them in the event of harm happening.

The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment is to evidence that Aberdeen City Council are making decisions in an informed way, and that the impact of decisions made is understood and accepted. The legislation that is considered within this assessment are:

- Section 2 [Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics](#)
- Section 3 [Socio-Economic](#)
- Section 4 [Human Rights](#)
- Section 5 [Children and Young People’s Rights](#)

The term ‘policy’ is used throughout this document and applies to policies, proposals, strategies, provision, criteria, functions, practice, budget savings and activities that includes delivery of our services.

1. About the Policy

1.1 Title

Family Friendly Policies Project Update / Special Leave Policy

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

While we have existing family friendly policy and provisions, this project is about reviewing these provisions and consolidating them into one ‘suite’. It is also seeking to update the provisions to align with best practice.

The project is intended to have a positive impact on eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics. The project is applicable to people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and aims to promote good relations between all groups without any negative impact. The project is applicable to people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and aims to promote good relations between all groups without any negative impact. The project as a whole and the Special Leave Policy aims to demonstrate that the different needs of employees are being considered, thereby removing any negative impact on people with protected characteristics.

The Special Leave Policy provides details of the Council’s special leave provisions which may be available to employees to assist with their other responsibilities and personal circumstances in some situations. Its main aim is to provide supportive provisions to employees, to help them balance the demands of domestic and work responsibilities through offering paid and unpaid leave, according to the circumstances.

Committee are being asked to:

- Note the content of the report and the progress made to date within the Family Friendly Project.
- Approves changes to the Special Leave Policy to ensure compliance with the Carer’s Leave Act 2023 and the Paternity Leave (amendment) Regulations 2024.

1.3 Is this a new or existing policy?

Existing

1.4 Is this report going to a committee?
Yes
1.5 Committee name and date:
Staff Governance Committee – 24 th June 2024
1.6 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number:
CORS/24/185
1.7 Function and Cluster:
Corporate Services – People & Citizen Services

Impacts

This section demonstrates the considerations that have been made in relation to the policy - and that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted.

2: Equality Act 2010 - Protected Characteristics

Aberdeen City Council wants to ensure everyone is treated fairly. This section identifies the [protected characteristics](#) that the policy potentially affects and records the impact and mitigating steps.

2.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Protected Characteristic	What is the impact?				
	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Age					X
Disability					X
Gender Reassignment					X
Marriage and Civil Partnership					X
Pregnancy and Maternity					X
Race					X
Religion or Belief					X
Sex					X
Sexual Orientation					X

2.2 In what way will the policy impact people with these protected characteristics?

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 came into effect from 6 April 2024 and entitles employees up to one week's unpaid leave per year to care for a dependent with a long-term care need. This right applies from the first day of employment and can be used to provide or arrange care.

Changes have been made to the Special Leave Policy to ensure compliance with the legislation, as well as providing clear information to managers and employees.

The wording in the document has changed to include:

“Employees who are caring for a dependent with a long-term care need are entitled to a week of unpaid flexible leave per year. Managers can also consider, where appropriate, granting special leave such as

‘compassionate leave’ or agreeing with the employee that any time off required is taken as annual or flexi leave or that hours lost are made up at a later point.”

The Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force on 8 March 2024. The changes apply to children who are due to be born or placed for adoption after 6 April 2024. The following statutory provisions will change:

- Instead of taking the entire two week entitlement in consecutive weeks, employees can now separate their leave into separate one week blocks.
- Employees can take their paternity leave any time in the 52 weeks after the birth or adoption of their child.
- The notice period required for each period of leave has been shortened to 28 days, or four weeks.

For parents of babies born before 6 April 2024, the statutory provision remains that leave can only be taken in one continuous block of one or two weeks within the first eight weeks after birth, and notification of the leave before the end of the ‘qualifying week’ (15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth).

Changes are proposed to the Special Leave Policy to ensure that Aberdeen City Council is compliant with the amended regulations.

The ultimate aim is to ensure our provisions and policies are inclusive of all diverse family circumstances and who may hold intersectional protected characteristics. We will also make provisions on a case by case basis where required.

Information will be made available in alternative formats / paper copies where requested and would improve access to information for people with alternative format or language needs to include BSL.

2.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Data has been gathered regarding Special Leave as follows:

- Paid special leave provisions in scope for this project were used 3110 times in the last 5 years with an average of 1.8 days being taken. Of those who took these provisions, 2567 were female (82.54%) and 543 were male (17.46%).
- Unpaid special leave provisions in scope for this project were used 2330 times in the last 5 years with an average of 2.2 days being taken. Of those who took these provisions, 2088 were female (89.61%) and 242 were male (10.39%).

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

Benchmarking activities were conducted as part of this project to determine what other public sector organisations are offering in terms of family friendly provisions. Glasgow City Council, Scottish Borders Council, NHS Grampian, Fife Council, North Ayrshire Council and Perth and Kinross Council. Their responses showed that their offering is similar to Aberdeen City Council’s at present. Most of their guidance had been updated within the last year.

Accreditations through Close the Gap and The Miscarriage Association are used to provide additional frameworks for reference as part of the background research that was undertaken, as is guidance from Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy (e.g. citizens, community groups, or other people/groups)?

The Council’s LGBTQIA+ employee network and employee network for sex as a protected characteristic have been engaged with and provided the following insights:

- Ensuring that wording in guidance such as shared parental leave and maternity leave is inclusive and applicable to individuals/ parents/ families – regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.
- Underpinning that ACC recognises that individuals will have different experiences of what family means, and our policies should reflect this. This has led to changes in the wording around Bereavement leave (Special leave) to ensure that appropriate leave is applied when an individual loose an individual who has been a parent to them but is not their mother and/or father.

All Council ED&I groups will be engaged with further on the overall Family Friendly project, with feedback received fully considered and taken account of to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity of our policies.

In the Summer of 2023 an all-staff survey was launched to gain insight into views and experiences around current family friendly policies. While the response represented only a small portion of the workforce (86 responses), there were key insights which have impacted the work undertaken. This includes:

- Recognising that while the majority of respondents were aware of maternity leave, other provisions such as shared parental leave (49% aware) and time off for IVF treatment (21% aware) are not as well known. It is appreciated that not all provisions will be directly applicable to all employees, however it is important that across the workforce there is an awareness of these provisions and how they may apply to colleagues and direct reports. As the project is progressed there will be clear communication and promotion undertaken.
- Specific comments from the survey highlighted that whilst there were no concerns around the focus on maternity and support for new parents; there needed to be more focus on support for those with responsibility for older children and caring responsibilities for others such as elderly parents. The updating of the carers provisions and Special leave policy directly takes steps to address these concerns.
- Some respondents highlighted that specific training for managers around applying family friendly policies would support a consistent and emphatic treatment across ACC.
- Respondents also commented that they found policies and advice hard to find, and that the language could be clearer. The language and format of the policy and associated guidance documents have been reviewed to ensure clarity and inclusivity – and will be revisited as the project continues. A central SharePoint page has been launched which provides links to the policy and guidance documents.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

There are no evident negative impacts as a result of this policy.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?

High	
Medium	
Low	
Negative Impact Removed	

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

This section is used to consider the impact of the policy on people who might be **unemployed, single parents**, people with lower **education** or **literacy**, **looked after children**, those with **protected characteristics** as examples.

Use this guide to understand more on socio-economic inequalities: [The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Group	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Low income / income poverty – those who cannot afford regular bills, food, clothing payments.				X	
Low and/or no wealth – those who can meet basic living costs but have no savings for unexpected spend or provision for the future				X	
Material deprivation – those who cannot access basic goods and services, unable to repair/replace broken electrical goods, heat their homes or access to leisure or hobbies				X	
Area deprivation – consider where people live and where they work (accessibility and cost of transport)				X	
Socio-economic background – social class, parents' education, employment, income.				X	

3.2 In what way will the policy impact people in these groups?

Having clarity around the provision of paid/unpaid leave can assist the financial planning for many disadvantaged groups that cannot afford to take unpaid leave unexpectedly.

3.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Refer to 2.3

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

Refer to 2.3

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy? citizens, community groups, or other people/groups impacted by this policy?

Refer to 2.3

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

There are no evident negative impacts as a result of this policy.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?	High	
	Medium	
	Low	
	Negative Impact Removed	

4: Human Rights Impacts

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000

The Act sets out our human rights in a series of 'Articles'. Each Article deals with a different right.

Use this guide to understand more about [Human Rights](#).

4.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 6: Right to a fair trial		X	
Article 7: No punishment without law		X	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence		X	
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 10: Freedom of expression		X	
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association		X	
Article 12: Right to marry and start a family		X	
Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms		X	
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property		X	
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education		X	
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections		X	

4.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

The policy will have a neutral impact on Human Rights. There are no evident negative or positive impacts.

4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?	
N/A	
If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains
	Yes – negative impact reduced
	Yes - negative impact removed

5: Children and Young People’s Rights Impacts

The United Nations Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Children’s rights apply to every child/young person under the age of 18 and to adults still eligible to receive a “children’s service” (e.g. care leavers aged 18 – 25 years old).

The Conventions are also known as the “General Principles” and they help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. They are:

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interest of the child (Article 3)
3. Right to life survival and development (Article 6)
4. Right to be heard (Article 12)

You can [read the full UN Convention \(pdf\)](#), or [just a summary \(pdf\)](#), to find out more about the rights that are included.

5.1 What impact could this policy have on the rights of Children and Young People?

UNCRC and Optional Protocols	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 1: definition of the child		X	
Article 2: non-discrimination		X	
Article 3: best interests of the child			x
Article 4: implementation of the convention		X	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities			x
Article 6: life, survival and development		X	
Article 7: birth registration, name, nationality, care		X	
Article 8: protection and preservation of identity		X	
Article 9: separation from parents		X	
Article 10: family reunification		X	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		X	
Article 12: respect for the views of the child		X	
Article 13: freedom of expression		X	
Article 14: freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 15: freedom of association		X	
Article 16: right to privacy		X	
Article 17: access to information from the media		X	
Article 18: parental responsibilities and state assistance			x
Article 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect		X	
Article 20: children unable to live with their family		X	
Article 21: adoption		X	
Article 22: refugee children		X	
Article 23: children with a disability			x
Article 24: health and health services			x
Article 25: review of treatment in care		X	
Article 26: social security		X	
Article 27: adequate standard of living		X	
Article 28: right to education		X	
Article 29: goals of education		X	
Article 30: children from minority or indigenous groups			x

Article 31: leisure, play and culture		X	
Article 32: child labour		X	
Article 33: drug abuse		X	
Article 34: sexual exploitation		X	
Article 35: abduction, sale and trafficking		X	
Article 36: other forms of exploitation		X	
Article 37: inhumane treatment and detention		X	
Article 38: war and armed conflicts		X	
Article 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		X	
Article 40: juvenile justice		X	
Article 41: respect for higher national standards		X	
Article 42: knowledge of rights		X	
Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure			

5.2 In what way will the policy impact the rights of Children and Young People?

Positive impacts have been identified for some of the Articles that are aligned with the general principles of the Convention. More data and situational evidence would determine further impacts that the policy would have on young people and their rights.

5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

There are no evident negative impacts as a result of this policy.

If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

6: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?
By having such policies in place, this supports the Council in positioning ourselves as an employer of choice.
Overall summary of changes made as a result of impact assessment.
No changes as direct result of this assessment
Outline of how impact of policy will be monitored.
Annual review in line with policy schedules.
If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.
N/A

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Date	7/6/24
Chief Officer	Lindsay MacInnes (Interim)
Date	12/06/24