

Policy for time off for staff with Care Responsibilities

PAVS' policy and procedural documents have been developed to meet the specific needs of the Association and are periodically reviewed in line with any changes in the law or statutory provision. They are provided as an example for information purposes only.

Other Information Sheets in this series:

- PO1– Probationary Period Operational Procedure
- PO2– Staff Appraisal Policy
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PEMBROKESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES

POLICY ON TIME OFF FOR STAFF WITH CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS) recognises that staff members may have caring responsibilities and may require time-off to deal with related emergencies. This policy covers time off for staff with care responsibilities. Leave of Absence or Extended Unpaid Leave is covered by PAVS' Policy on Extended Unpaid Leave. Sickness absence of employees is covered by PAVS' Sickness and Absence Policy.

The Association wishes to provide a supportive environment in which staff members are able to balance caring responsibilities with their working life. The following arrangements have therefore been agreed with Trustees and incorporate recent new legislation introduced within the Employment Relations Act 1999.

A. TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

Defining Time Off for Dependants

There will be occasions when staff with caring responsibilities have to deal with an *unexpected or sudden problem or emergency* concerning their dependant. This may include:

- ***Unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant***
e.g. a childminder or nurse may fail to turn up as arranged or a nursery or nursing home may close unexpectedly.
- ***Unexpected incident involving a child during school hours***
e.g. injury at school, suspension from school, etc.
- ***Accident or illness of dependant***
- ***Death of a dependant****

Defining dependants

For the purposes of this policy, dependants are immediate family such as children, partners and parents who do not have to be living with the employee to fall under the scope of this policy, or someone, unrelated, for whom the employee has caring responsibilities.

Leave allowance

Employees do not have to complete a qualifying period of service in order to be able to take time off in an emergency. When an emergency such as those listed above arises, "reasonable time off" will be allowed to deal with the problem. In most cases, it is anticipated that one to two days (with pay) will be sufficient to deal with the immediate issues, and to make longer term care arrangements. Additional leave would need to be negotiated on an individual basis, exceptional cases will be considered by the Director.

***Note.** PAVS' policy is to allow staff where appropriate, up to five days' paid leave per year to care for a sick dependant other than a child. Existing arrangements relating to the death or serious illness of an immediate family member will remain in place i.e. Up to 5 days' leave with pay (depending on individual circumstances) on application to the Director and up to a further 3 months unpaid leave authorised by the Executive Committee.

Authorising special leave for care responsibilities

Applications for special leave should be made to the Director, in conjunction with the employee's line manager.

B. PARENTAL LEAVE

Defining Parental Leave

All staff members who have been employed by the Association for one year or more and have children who are aged 16 and under or 18 and under (if disabled or in full-time education) are eligible for:

- A total of 13 weeks unpaid parental leave is the maximum leave that the Association will allow per child up the age of 16/18 as defined above
- A maximum of 4 weeks unpaid parental leave per child in any year (January to December).
- The right to return to the same job at the end of parental leave.

Authorising Parental Leave

- All requests for Parental Leave must be made in writing, agreed by the Line Manager and authorised by the Director and forwarded to the Executive Committee for final assent.
- Such requests should give the Association as much prior notice as possible, to enable alternative work arrangements to be made.

Cover for staff during Parental Leave

Line Managers must assess whether cover will be provided for staff who are absent on Parental Leave. The impact on other staff in the section should not be ignored and re-distribution of work needs to be very carefully considered. Any cost implications relating to this should be discussed with the Director and referred to Trustees, as appropriate.

Returning to work

A return to work date must be agreed and the employee must undertake in writing to adhere to the agreed date. The signed agreement should be held on the personnel file. Failure to return to work on the agreed date may result in action being taken against the employee for breach of contractual obligation.

Right of Appeal

Staff who feel that they have been unreasonably refused time-off under these arrangements should raise the matter through the Association's Grievance Procedure.

Any queries relating to these schemes should be directed to the Director or Administrative Officer.