

Anonymised Parent and Carer Staff Support Policy

Approved by the XXX on XXXXXXXX

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This policy aims to consolidate the existing sub-policies and to fill the gaps that have become apparent in the (Anonymised) [Worker Rights and Wellbeing Policy](#), as they apply to our workers who are also parents or have caring responsibilities.

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1. Introduction

The world of work is structurally discriminatory against people who have children or caring responsibilities. This plays out as gendered discrimination in hiring and pay differentials, lack of opportunities for career development, hiring of workers on precarious contracts without any statutory benefits, and lack of pay adjustments for additional care or childcare responsibilities. Beyond this, many working cultures remain inaccessible to parents and carers due to expectations of long working hours and wider stress levels that are not adequately addressed for any workers, but which are more impactful on those who also have fundamental caring responsibilities for others. Overwork culture of the organisation continues to be a barrier to accessible employment on several fronts, which we are trying to address.

The organisation is a growing employer and cannot change the wider system, but is trying to be deliberate in challenging the ways in which discrimination against parents and carers is still the norm in most work places. The policies below and are an attempt to do so, though are not exhaustive, building on the strengths of our [Worker Rights and Wellbeing Policy](#) and bringing in new practices to deepen our attempts to support parents and carers on the staff team. We want to continue to find ways to be a better employer to staff with parenting and caring responsibilities, so want to hear from you if there are ways we could improve this document and the ways of working that it aims to foster. **[email]**

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2. Parental leave

The organisation will not discriminate against any employees on the basis of their caring or prospective caring duties. We will do our best to support employees with caring responsibilities and recognise the role of progressive attitudes towards social reproduction and care work in building a better world.

For all types of parental leave:

- The employee should inform the organisation of the date they intend to start maternity leave 8 weeks before that date.
- To be entitled to this you need to have worked at the organisation for 6 months before the paid leave begins.
- Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.
- You can still be made redundant on leave, as per the organisation's redundancy policy.
- If a decision is made by the employee not to return to the organisation after their leave the normal contractual period of notice must be given in writing
- If an employee has taken benefits in addition to the statutory leave and decides to leave the organisation within 6 months of returning to work they will have to repay half the additional salary within a period of twelve months from the date the employee resigns (or a period of time and time-frame agreed by both parties). The employee will be paid half the amount of these benefits if they state they will not be returning to the organisation when they start their leave.

3. Parental leave pay

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. You get:

- 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
- £151.20 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

In addition to this the organisation will offer:

- 8 weeks of leave on full pay, inclusive of SMP;
- 22 weeks of leave on half pay, plus SMP;
- 9 weeks of leave at SMP only
- 13 weeks of unpaid leave on the condition that the employee returns to the organisation for at least 6 months following their maternity leave.

Tax and National Insurance on OMP will be deducted in the same way as with regular wages.

- The employee is entitled to time off to attend pregnancy health appointments (though should inform their staff support person with as much advance notice as possible before appointments).
- The employee is entitled to go on maternity leave from 11 weeks before their due date, or earlier if a baby is born prematurely.

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- If the employee is not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay - they are entitled to the Maternity Allowance Benefit.
- The amount you can get depends on [your eligibility](#).

Paternity/other parental carer pay

Statutory Paternity Pay is one or two consecutive weeks at £145 per week or 90% of normal weekly earnings, whichever is the lower. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted in the same way as with regular wages.

If you take [Shared Parental Leave](#) you'll get Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). ShPP is £151.20 a week or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

In addition, the organisation shall provide to fathers/other parental carers who provide 2 months notice:

- 100% of normal weekly earnings for the first 8 weeks or any other 8 week period up to week 39
- Will allow the employee to take 8 weeks leave at 50% of normal earnings provided it is directly before or after any period of leave on full pay

Statutory Paternity Rights

An employee will be recognised as entitled to paternity leave if:

- Have or expect to have full involvement in the child's upbringing;
- Are the biological father of the child;
- or are the mother's husband or partner. This includes a mother's partner in a same sex relationship.

Adoption Leave

The organisation shall provide the rights, either maternity leave or paternity/other parental carer pay, depending on the role of the parental carer in the adoption.

4. Carer leave

Employed carers have the right not to be discriminated against due to their caring responsibilities and to have a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with particular situations affecting their dependants.

A 'carer' is someone who provides a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for another individual.

A 'dependant' is defined as a spouse, partner, child, parent or grandparent of the employee, or someone who depends on them for care (this could include: chosen family, housemates, or others for whom the member of staff provides care). Examples of care might be practical (such

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as help with the shopping and cleaning), physical (such as help with moving and handling) or mental and emotional (such as supporting someone to manage anxiety).

The organisation wants to help staff balance their working and caring commitments, not feel added stress and to continue to be effective in their job.

Care work may happen in a single period, or may be spread throughout the year in a long-term way. Staff are entitled to the following:

- 16 days carer leave at 100% wages
- 16 days care leave at 50% wages
- Additional time can be taken, unpaid, if agreed with staff support.

Staff can take this leave in a way which works best for their caring responsibility, and this needs to be communicated with the Line Manager. Time off can be spread out longer, if workers are able to work reduced hours during their time doing care work (ie - if the worker is only off for mornings and can still work half-days, they can take 32 half-days off on full pay).

These times off also apply to bereavements, after the death of a close loved one, but must be used in the time immediately after the death, rather than being spread out.

If a member of staff is away, or is expected to be away for more than 3 months doing care work, the organisation may decide to hire a short-term replacement for the member of staff, while holding the role for them, unpaid, after a fixed period of time (to be agreed with the member of staff, if there is any way to indicate timescales, and so any replacement worker is able to have clarity about the length of their employment. the organisation will hold funds in reserves to cover these costs, should they arise.

When possible, a plan for how to suspend their work commitments, or have them covered during this time away should be made, for example in the case of caring for a loved one in a medium or long term way. The worker should aim to keep their staff support informed of their expected return dates when possible.

Return to work after an extended leave for caring or a bereavement should be discussed with staff support, and the worker should be offered a phased return to work if required.

5. Parent and carer subsidy

the organisation offers a Parent and carer subsidy of a 12% increase on the staff member's baseline wage for a first child and a 6% increase for each additional child, as a strong gesture towards ensuring we are not missing potential staff with children or other caring responsibilities and so staff can continue to work with the organisation if they do choose to have kids or need to look after a family member. We would cap this at an additional £10,000/year, above the baseline wage, should it ever arise as an issue. (The subsidy will always be re-calculated based on any increases to the staff baseline wage, ie - annual raises for inflation.)

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The subsidy applies from the point a new member of staff joins the team, who has parenting or caring responsibilities, or from when an existing member of staff goes on parental leave or takes on caring responsibilities.

Given how different parent and carer situations can be though, when a member of staff is becoming a new parent or takes on caring responsibilities, or when a new member of staff is hired who is a parent or carer, that the organisation - via the SFC - takes responsibility to work with them to identify if there are any other ways of using the subsidy amount, that might better suit their particular needs, regarding childcare, benefits, health and disability support or any other relevant factors.

There is still an expectation that staff will make arrangements for their own childcare or care during the hours they are expected to work. In addition, the organisation will provide the subsidy above to contribute towards the additional costs associated with parenting or caring responsibilities.

Initial decision: XXXXXX

Updated decision: XXXX

6. Flexible working for parents and carers

Workers who are parents or who have ongoing caring responsibilities, are entitled to extra flexibility in their working hours. This may include, but isn't limited to:

- Switching regular work days to adapt to childcare/other carer's availability,
- Spreading contracted hours across more days of the week, to facilitate care responsibilities (ie - around school or nursery hours, or care shifts),
- Working irregular hours, if convenient for the member of staff (alongside the commitment in point 7, to provide childcare for more the organisation events),
- Support to reschedule or find other staff to assist with meetings or events that land in times where childcare or alternative care isn't available (when possible),
- Support to explore job sharing possibilities.

All of the above will need to be discussed and agreed with the members of staff's staff support person, but all reasonable efforts should be made to make working hours more manageable for parents and carers on the staff team.

7. Paying for nursery deposits

The organisation can pay nursery deposits for members of the staff team, up to £1000. Deposits will be paid directly to the nursery, so staff will not be expected to repay them, as it will be an agreement between the organisation and the nursery.

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If the member of staff was to leave the organisation staff team while their child was still in nursery, the agreement would still be directly between the organisation and the nursery, until the point when the child leaves the nursery and the organisation is reimbursed for the deposit.

8. Providing or subsidising childcare or care costs arising from out-of-hours work

Workers will be expected to agree core working hours with their staff supervisor, that most the organisation work will fall within. These will be between 08:00 and 18:00 on the number of days they are contracted to work, between Monday and Friday, unless otherwise agreed.

For work that needs to be carried out beyond these hours (ie - early weekday mornings, evenings and weekends), the organisation will either provide childcare at union events or actions, available to staff's children, or pay for individual childcare costs (with receipts provided) at a rate of up to £9/hr, for up to 12 hours/month (or a total of £1296 per member of staff/year). When possible, this should be agreed with the staff supervisor in advance.

These costs can be claimed via the expense form, with accompanying receipts and dates/times of the work that was being done.

9. Support accessing child care or caring benefits

When a new member of staff is hired who is a parent or carer, or when a current member of staff becomes a parent or carer, support should be provided to assist the member of staff to assess any wider benefits or care support that they could be accessing, alongside their salary. This may involve re-allocating the parent and carer subsidy that the member of staff receives - with their explicit written permission - to pay for childcare, care or other relevant services, if there is a financial benefit to the member of staff in the organisation doing so (ie - if a tax-free expense, or government voucher scheme was available, or there was potential for an in-house creche at the office at some stage.)

Responsibility for providing this support lies with the SFC, to assign to an SFC member, but if the time or relevant expertise is not available within the current SFC membership, this could be contracted out to an external benefits advisor.

10. Improving how we communicate about our support for parents and carers

a. With staff

When a new member of staff joins the team, it is the responsibility of the staff supervisor to share and explain the Parent and Carer Staff Support Policy with them, as part of their induction.

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When a member of staff's circumstances change and they become a parent or carer, it is the responsibility of the staff supervisor to share and explain the Parent and Carer Staff Support Policy with them.

b. In public communications

In all new job descriptions and job adverts, the organisation should be sure to make direct reference to the following policies, as part of the terms and conditions of the job:

1. Generous parental leave policies
2. Generous parent and carer time off policies
3. A parental subsidy of 12% on base wages for staff with parenting or caring responsibilities (and 6% further for additional children or caring responsibilities)
4. Flexible working and job share potential
5. Support accessing childcare during out-of-hours work.

11. Limitations of support for parents and carers

While the organisation aims to set the bar much higher than most employers in regards to support for parents and carers, it also recognises that it cannot fully-address the range of additional costs or forms of discrimination faced by parents and carers in the wider world. With this in mind, the following principles aim to highlight the limits to the policies above:

- 1) Parents are expected to arrange and are responsible for arranging their own childcare provision during work hours;
- 2) Carers are responsible for working to arrange long-term support for their caring responsibilities, if, following any reasonable adjustments and beyond 3 months of leave (unless specifically arranged with their staff support person), their caring responsibilities impede their abilities to carry out core job roles for the organisation;
- 3) There will be regular times when it is required for the organisation staff to work less-social hours, in order to accommodate voluntary member organising, and while there will be efforts made to minimise this, and to accommodate for parents and carers' needs, these realities can't be completely removed from most the organisation roles;
- 4) Offering support to staff to access public benefits available to parents and carers, will have limits, based on availability of SFC members or external advisors.