



BEREAVEMENT & COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1

Totton & Eling Town Council recognises that employees may experience difficult and distressing personal circumstances, including the death of someone close to them or a serious illness, accident or other significant event affecting themselves or a close family member or dependant.

1.2

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees with reasonable time away from work to deal with bereavement, attend funerals, make necessary arrangements and deal with other serious personal or family circumstances.

1.3

This policy applies to employees with a Contract of Employment. There is no minimum length of service required to access the Council's contractual paid bereavement leave.

1.4

This policy does not affect any statutory entitlement an employee may have. Where an employee has a separate statutory entitlement to leave, that entitlement will apply in accordance with the relevant legislation.

2. Bereavement Leave

2.1

The Council will normally provide up to 2 working days' paid bereavement leave following the death of an immediate relative.

2.2

For the purposes of this policy, immediate relatives include:

- Spouse or civil partner;
- Partner;
- Parent or stepparent;
- Brother or sister;

- Child or stepchild.

2.3

The above list is not exhaustive. The Council will consider requests for bereavement leave sympathetically where an employee has experienced the death of someone who was particularly close to them or played a significant role in their life.

2.4

Bereavement leave may be used to deal with the immediate impact of the bereavement, make funeral arrangements and/or attend the funeral or other associated arrangements.

2.5

Bereavement leave does not necessarily have to be taken consecutively or immediately following the death. Where reasonably practicable, the timing of the leave will be agreed between the employee and their line manager, taking account of the employee's circumstances.

3. Compassionate Leave

3.1 Compassionate leave may be considered where an employee experiences a serious or distressing personal or family circumstance which requires them to take time away from work.

3.2 Examples may include:

- A close family member or dependant being seriously ill or involved in a serious accident;
- A close family member or dependant receiving a serious or life-limiting diagnosis;
- A significant and unexpected family emergency;
- A serious incident affecting the employee or their immediate family; or
- Other exceptional personal or family circumstances where the employee's presence or support is reasonably required.

This list is not exhaustive.

3.3 Compassionate leave is normally unpaid and is intended to provide employees with reasonable time away from work in exceptional circumstances.

3.4 The amount of compassionate leave granted will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the individual circumstances and the amount of time reasonably required.

3.5 Where additional time away from work is required, the employee may, by agreement with their line manager, use annual leave or request unpaid leave, where appropriate.

3.6 Compassionate leave is separate from any statutory or contractual entitlement to other types of leave, including time off for dependants, sickness absence, parental bereavement leave or other statutory family-related leave.

3.7 Requests for compassionate leave should be made to the employee's line manager as soon as reasonably practicable. The Council will deal with such requests sensitively and will only request information reasonably necessary to consider the request.

4. Time Off for Dependants

4.1

Employees may also have a statutory right to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant.

4.2

A dependant may include:

- A spouse, civil partner or partner;
- A child;
- A parent;
- A person who lives in the same household, excluding tenants, lodgers or employees; or
- A person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance or care.

This list is not exhaustive.

4.3

Statutory time off for dependants is separate from the Council's contractual bereavement and compassionate leave provisions.

4.4

Employees should discuss their circumstances with their line manager so that the appropriate form of leave can be identified.

5. Parental Bereavement Leave

5.1

Where an employee experiences the death or stillbirth of a child and meets the relevant statutory eligibility requirements, they may be entitled to statutory Parental Bereavement Leave and, where applicable, Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay.

5.2

Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave is separate from the Council's contractual paid bereavement leave entitlement under this policy.

5.3

The Council will comply with the statutory provisions relating to Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay as amended from time to time.

6. Notification and Arrangements

6.1

Employees should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable when they require bereavement or compassionate leave.

6.2

The Council recognises that an employee may not always be in a position to make contact themselves. In such circumstances, a family member, friend or another appropriate person may contact the Council on the employee's behalf.

6.3

Employees will not normally be expected to provide detailed information about their personal circumstances. The Council will only request information that is reasonably necessary to establish the appropriate leave arrangements.

6.4

The timing of leave will be agreed wherever possible between the employee and their line manager, taking account of the employee's circumstances and operational requirements.

7. Further Support

7.1

The Council recognises that bereavement and serious personal circumstances can affect an employee beyond the period of leave itself.

7.2

Where appropriate, the employee and their line manager may discuss any additional support that may assist the employee, including a phased return to work, temporary adjustments to working arrangements, annual leave or other appropriate measures.

7.3

Where an employee is unable to work because they are unwell, the Council's Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

8. Misuse of the Policy

8.1

The Council trusts employees to use bereavement and compassionate leave appropriately.

8.2

Any deliberate misuse of the policy may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

8.3

The Council will consider the circumstances carefully before taking any action in relation to an alleged misuse of bereavement or compassionate leave.

9. Confidentiality and Sensitivity

9.1

Requests for bereavement or compassionate leave will be handled sensitively and, wherever possible, confidentially.

9.2

Information relating to an employee's personal or family circumstances will only be shared with those who need the information for legitimate management, HR or administrative purposes.

10. Complaints

10.1

If an employee has a concern regarding the application of this policy, they should raise this with their line manager in the first instance.

10.2

Where the matter cannot be resolved informally, the employee may raise the matter under the Council's Grievance Procedure.

11. Review of Policy

11.1

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains consistent with employment legislation and the Council's employment practices.

11.2

The Council reserves the right to amend this policy where necessary to reflect changes in legislation or statutory entitlements.

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Susan Cutler

Position: Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Date: September 2026

Signature: