



**SOUTHWARK COUNCIL
FAMILY FRIENDLY
POLICIES**

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1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1 Southwark Council recognises the challenges faced by employees around family commitments and has put in place a range of systems and procedures to support them, which are outlined in this document.
- 1.2 The policies within this document were drawn up in consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- 1.3 This document applies to all council employees excluding those directly employed by schools.
- 1.4 Southwark Council welcomes applications from employees to work flexibly in order to support their family needs, and recognises that the move to “hybrid” working with more opportunities to work from home, will support parents with childcare commitments and those with other caring commitments (see Section Eleven).
- 1.5 In terms of maternity leave and pay and adoption leave and pay, this policy applies to employees who have a child on or after 1 April 2022.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 The council recognises and values the diverse workforce and is committed to helping employees with caring responsibilities to balance work and family life. It will do this by following consistent, fair and transparent processes. The council recognises that there is a range of family formations and these policies endeavour to use inclusive language to reflect this diversity.
- 2.2 An equality analysis has been undertaken for these policies with due regard to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 The impact on climate change has been considered in the development of these policies.

3. Language

- 3.1 The language of ‘maternity’ and ‘paternity’ reflects the current legislative position around leave and pay, and the council recognises that parents may not identify with these terms.

Section One: Maternity

4. Maternity leave and pay

- 4.1 The council offers maternity pay and adoption pay at similar rates but with slightly different eligibility and notification requirements.
- 4.2 An employee with 26 weeks' or more continuous local government service by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) will receive:
- 6 weeks' full pay followed by
 - 20 weeks' half pay plus statutory maternity pay (SMP).
- 4.3 If the 26 weeks' service includes service with another authority then technically the employee is not entitled to SMP but the council will pay an allowance equivalent to SMP.
- 4.4 Half pay and SMP must not exceed full pay.
- 4.5 An employee with less than 26 weeks' continuous local government service by the end of the 15th week before the EWC will not receive occupational (contractual) maternity Pay or SMP but will receive two weeks' pay plus up to two weeks paid special leave.
- 4.6 If the employee does not qualify for SMP they may be able to claim Maternity Allowance (MA), using the claim form MA1. Further information on this option is available on the gov.uk website.
- 4.7 Employees returning to work after maternity leave are entitled to return to the same job. If this is not reasonably practicable they are entitled to return to a suitable position with terms and conditions no less favourable than those they were employed on before maternity leave.

5. Maternity leave

- 5.1 All employees who give birth, regardless of the hours they work, have the right to take maternity leave of up to 52 weeks, although not all of this is paid leave. The first two weeks after a child's birth are classed as "compulsory maternity leave".

6. Notification of maternity leave

- 6.1 Employees must advise their line manager of their intention to take maternity leave no later than 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. Pregnant employees must show their line manager the original maternity certificate (Form MATB1) when this is provided.

7. Health and safety of pregnant employees

7.1 The council strives to provide a healthy working environment for all employees and to provide additional/specific support to those who:

- are pregnant
- have recently returned from maternity leave
- are breast-feeding

7.2 For further information, read [health and safety during pregnancy guidance](#) for new and expectant mothers.

7.3 Managers will carry out a risk assessment of the working environment when informed that an employee is pregnant and will offer appropriate support and make adjustments where necessary. Employees should tell their manager if they need additional help or adjustments throughout their pregnancy.

8. Maternity pay

8.1 Southwark Council pays maternity pay for a maximum of 39 weeks which consists of two elements:

- Statutory maternity pay (SMP) to those who are eligible
- Occupational (contractual) maternity pay (OMP)

9. Statutory maternity pay

9.1 Statutory maternity pay (SMP) is set at a rate determined annually by the Government, and is payable for a maximum of 39 weeks.

9.2 To qualify for SMP, employees must have 26 weeks' or more continuous local government service into the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

9.3 SMP is paid at the following rates:

- 90% of average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks of maternity leave
- Remainder of the statutory maternity leave period, of up to 33 further weeks, at the standard rate or 90% of average weekly earnings, if this is lower.

10. Occupational (contractual) maternity pay

- 10.1 Occupational maternity pay (OMP) is an additional payment to council employees who have had at least 26 weeks' continuous **local government** service by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).
- 10.2 Continuous local government service means working, without a break, for Southwark Council or another local authority.
- 10.3 It is paid at the following rates:
- First six weeks of maternity leave is paid at full pay (offset against statutory maternity pay)
 - The following 20 weeks is paid at half pay plus statutory maternity pay, capped at full pay
- 10.4 The remainder of the maternity leave period will be paid at the statutory maternity pay rate, where eligible, or be unpaid.

11. Maternity allowance

- 11.1 Employees who are not eligible for statutory maternity pay (SMP) may be able to claim Maternity Allowance which is paid at similar rates directly through the benefit system. <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance>.
- 11.2 In these circumstances the council will pay the first two weeks of compulsory maternity leave at full pay plus up to two weeks' paid special leave.

12. Time off for antenatal care and hospital appointments

- 12.1 Council employees who are expectant parents, and the spouses/partners of expectant parents, are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal care.
- 12.2 Expectant parents are also entitled to paid time off for other hospital and clinic appointments resulting from, or relating to, their pregnancy if on the advice of a registered GP, midwife or health visitor.

13. Returning to work

- 13.1 The employee is required to complete a form indicating their expected date of returning to work, which will be confirmed by their manager. The employee must notify the council if this date is expected to change and is required to give 21 days' notice of

an earlier return.

13.2 The employee may also wish to talk to their manager about changing their working pattern prior to returning to work (on a temporary or permanent basis). Details are at Section Five under “ordinary parental leave”. Requests will be considered sympathetically but with consideration to the needs of the service. There is also an employment break scheme, details of which can be found at Section Six.

14. Premature births

14.1 There are paid special leave arrangements in place for when a baby is born before their due date, to cover the period while the baby is in hospital. The council’s normal conditions on entitlement to maternity leave and pay apply once the baby leaves hospital, plus an additional week’s unpaid leave which can be added to the period of maternity leave.

[See premature births and miscarriages policy.](#)

15. Stillbirths or miscarriage

15.1 A stillbirth is medically defined as when a baby is born dead after 24 completed weeks of pregnancy. In this situation, or when the baby dies soon after birth, the employee is still entitled to maternity leave and pay. [See premature births and miscarriages policy.](#)

15.2 The spouse/partner of the person who gives birth is able to take paid Maternity Support Leave (see Section Four) following a stillbirth.

15.3 If the death of an unborn child occurs before the 24th week of pregnancy, this is classed as a miscarriage. In this situation, the employee is not eligible for maternity entitlements, but may be eligible for sick pay and a period of [special leave](#).

16. Dependants’ leave and parental bereavement

16.1 Additional entitlements to time off such as dependants’ leave, and parental bereavement leave, are available for parents.

16.2 For further details, read our [parental bereavement leave policy](#) and [special leave - dependants \(unpaid\) policy](#).

Section Two: Adoption and surrogacy

17. Adoption leave and pay

17.1 Adoption leave and adoption pay are available, subject to eligibility criteria, to:

- Individual employees who adopt a child,
- one member of a couple where a couple jointly adopts a child,
- an employee who is:
 - a local authority foster carer approved as a prospective adopter when a child is placed with them in a foster to adopt situation
 - one person in a couple who are the legal parents of a child born through surrogacy

17.2 Where a couple is adopting jointly, or jointly become legal parents via surrogacy, only one may take adoption leave and receive adoption pay. The other, subject to meeting specific eligibility criteria, may be entitled to take paid maternity support leave (see Section Four) and shared parental/adoption leave (see Section Seven).

17.3 Adoption leave and pay is only available when a child is newly-matched for adoption or in the case of surrogacy, upon birth.

18. Notification of adoption

18.1 Employees must notify their manager in writing within seven days when:

- they are matched with a child
- or,
- they intend to take adoption leave

18.2 However, employees must give their manager at least 28 days' notice of adoption leave. Employees should give as much notice as possible, taking into account the needs of the service.

18.3 For a surrogacy, employees must tell their manager of their intention to take adoption leave at least 15 weeks before the child is due

18.4 Employees will need to provide to their manager:

- the date that they intend to start adoption leave
- the expected week of the placement of the child, or the expected week of childbirth, in the case of surrogacy
- a matching certificate completed by the adoption agency, or a parental order in the case of surrogacy, within six months of the start of adoption leave

18.5 Employees can choose to start their leave from:

- the date of the child's placement
or
- a fixed date, which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement

18.6 In the case of a surrogacy, adoption leave can start the day of the birth or the day after.

18.7 If an employee changes their mind about the date on which they intend to start their adoption leave, they should tell their manager with at least 28 days' notice of the revised start date.

19. Adoption from overseas

19.1 Eligible employees adopting a child from overseas must tell their manager of the date on which:

- they receive official notification
- they expect the child to enter the UK

19.2 Employees must:

- give at least 28 days' notice of when they wish their adoption leave to start
- tell their manager about the child's entry into the UK with 28 days' notice, if applicable

20. Adoption leave

20.1 All qualifying employees are entitled to a total of 52 weeks adoption leave, not all of which is paid, regardless of the number of hours they work or their length of service.

20.2 To qualify for adoption leave, employees must:

- have an approved adoption agency match them with a child
- be one of a couple who has been jointly matched with a child for adoption
or
- be the legal parent of a child born via surrogacy

20.3 The second parent or spouse/partner may be entitled to paid maternity support leave (see Section Four) and/or shared parental leave (see Section Seven).

20.4 Employees returning to work after adoption leave are entitled to return to the same job. If this is not reasonably practicable for a reason other than redundancy, they are entitled to return to a suitable position. Their terms and conditions will be no less favourable than those they were employed on before adoption leave.

20.5 Only one period of adoption leave will be available as part of the same arrangement even if:

- more than one child is placed for adoption at that time
- a surrogacy arrangement results in multiple births

20.6 If an expected adoption placement does not happen, or ends, after an employee has started the leave period, adoption leave and adoption pay will be available for eight weeks after notification that the child will not be placed or that the placement has ended.

21. Adoption pay

21.1 The council offers maternity pay and adoption pay at similar rates but with slightly different eligibility and notification requirements.

22. Statutory adoption pay

22.1 Statutory adoption pay (SAP) is payable for up to 39 weeks during adoption leave. An employee is entitled to SAP if they have been continuously employed in local government for at least 26 weeks ending with the week in which they are notified of the match, and be earning an amount above the Lower Earnings Limit.

22.2 Employees who are not entitled to statutory adoption pay may be entitled to receive an allowance, payable by the government. The council will provide a form which explains why they do not qualify. In these circumstances the council will pay the first two weeks' leave at full pay plus up to two weeks paid special leave.

23. Occupational (contractual) adoption pay

23.1 Occupational adoption pay is paid by the council over and above the statutory amount, where the eligibility criteria is met:

- The employee must have 26 weeks or more of continuous local government service into the 15th week before being advised of the match.

23.2 Rates of occupational adoption pay

- First 6 weeks on full pay set off against any entitlement to Statutory Adoption pay
- Following 20 weeks on half pay, plus any entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay
- Remainder of the adoption leave period at SAP rate, if eligible, or unpaid.

24. Time off for adoption appointments

24.1 Employees who are matched with a child can take paid time off before the child's placement to attend a reasonable number of adoption appointments.

24.2 For a surrogacy, employees can take paid time off to accompany the person who gives birth to a reasonable number of antenatal and other medical appointments relating to the pregnancy.

25. Returning to work

25.1 The employee is required to complete a form indicating their expected date of returning to work, which will be confirmed by their manager. The employee must notify the council if this date is expected to change and must give 21 days' notice of an earlier return.

25.2 The employee may also wish to talk to their manager about changing their working pattern prior to returning to work (on a temporary or permanent basis) (see Section Five on ordinary parental leave). Requests will be considered sympathetically and also with consideration to the needs of the service. There is also an employment break scheme, details of which can be found at Section Six.

Section Three: Terms and conditions whilst on maternity and adoption leave

26. Retaining terms and conditions

26.1 During maternity and adoption leave, employees are entitled to all the benefits, terms and conditions of their contract other than salary.

26.2 Employees returning to work after maternity or adoption leave are able to return to the same job or, if this is not possible, to one on no less favourable terms than the one they were employed on before maternity leave.

27. Annual leave and bank holidays

27.1 Employees on maternity and adoption leave continue to accrue annual leave including a compensatory day for each bank holiday which falls during their leave. For part-time employees, this is the number of bank holidays they would have had if not on leave.

27.2 If it has not been possible to take accrued annual leave in one leave year because of maternity or adoption leave, employees can carry this forward into the next leave year.

28. Pension entitlements

- 28.1 Employees on paid maternity and adoption leave will continue to build up a pension as if they were working normally and receiving normal pay.
- 28.2 The period of unpaid additional maternity or adoption leave (normally after week 39) or unpaid shared parental leave will **not** count for pension purposes unless the employee pays extra pension contributions to buy the pension 'lost'.
- 28.3 Details of these pension entitlements are available on the [Local Government Pension Scheme \(LGPS\)](#).

29. Keeping in touch (KIT) days

- 29.1 KIT days allow employees to choose to work for up to 10 days during their maternity or adoption leave period and to be paid for that work without:
- bringing the period of maternity or adoption leave to an end
 - the loss of Statutory Maternity or Adoption Pay as a result of carrying out that work
- 29.2 Employees may choose to work only a few hours on each occasion. However, the hours worked, if less than a full day, will count as 'days' under the scheme.
- 29.3 When combined with entitlement to maternity pay, this may exceed the standard daily rate of pay. If this happens, this will be offset against the pay the employee would otherwise have received.
- 29.4 As an alternative to pay for the hours worked on a KIT day, an employee may opt for time off in lieu (TOIL). They must take this within 12 months of returning from maternity or adoption leave.
- 29.5 For these purposes, 'work' can be training or any other agreed activity to support the employee's return to work. This could include attending conferences, appraisals or team meetings.
- 29.6 The opportunity to work KIT days will apply to the entire period of ordinary and additional maternity or adoption leave apart from the two weeks of compulsory maternity leave immediately after childbirth, when employees are not permitted to work.
- 29.7 For shared parental leave, employees may work for up to 20 shared parental leave in touch (SPLIT) days during shared parental leave without bringing it to an end.
- 29.8 The shared parental leave in touch days available during shared parental leave are in addition to the ten keep in touch days available during maternity and adoption leave.

29.9 KIT and SPLIT days are optional.

30. Rights on and after return to work

30.1 Following maternity or adoption leave, employees are entitled to:

- return to the same job
or, if this is not reasonably practicable,
- return to a similar role with equivalent pay and terms and conditions

30.2 For employees who work full time before taking maternity/adoption leave, the council will consider all requests for part-time working or other flexible working arrangements (see Section Eleven). More information is available in the [flexible working policy](#).

Section Four: Maternity and adoption support leave

31. Maternity support leave and pay

31.1 Employees are entitled to up to two weeks' paid maternity support leave which can be taken in a single block of two weeks, or two blocks of one week.

31.2 An employee can take paid maternity support leave to care for the child or support the person who has given birth if they are the spouse/partner or nominated carer. They must take this leave within 56 days of the birth of the child.

31.3 Employees must give notice in writing of their intention to take maternity support leave. At least 15 weeks before the baby is due, employees must tell their employer

- the due date
- when you want your leave to start, for example the day of the birth or the week after the birth
- if you want 1 or 2 weeks' leave
- whether you want 1 block of leave or 2 blocks of leave of 1 week

31.4 To qualify, an employee must:

- have been continuously employed in local government for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth. This includes where they would have satisfied this condition but the child:
 - was born before the end of the 15th week
 - was stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
 - died soon after the birth

31.5 The employee must also:

- be the child's father and share, or expect to share, responsibility for the child's upbringing
- be the spouse or partner of the person who gives birth
or
- be a carer nominated by the person who gives birth

32. Adoption support leave and pay

32.1 Employees adopting within the UK are entitled to take two weeks' paid adoption support leave if they are the spouse/partner of the parent who is adopting.

32.2 Employees must give notice in writing of their intention to take adoption support leave. The notice should be no later than seven days after the adoption agency notifies them of their match with a child. The notice must specify:

- the date they expect the child to be placed for adoption
- the date the employee intends to start adoption support leave
- the length of the intended adoption support leave period
- the date on which the adoption agency notified them of having been matched with the child

32.3 An employee can take adoption support leave when having a child through a surrogacy arrangement. To qualify, an employee must:

- be eligible for a parental order
- have been continuously employed in local government for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before placement of the child. This includes where they would have satisfied this condition but:
 - the child was born before the end of that 15th week
 - was stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
 - died soon after the birth
- have formally notified their employer of the date on which they intend to take adoption support leave
- where applicable, have produced evidence supporting the claim for adoption support leave

Section Five: Other time off entitlements

33. Time off to attend adoption appointments

33.1 Employees who are adopting a child are entitled to take reasonable paid time off to attend official adoption appointments.

33.2 The appointments must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. Employees must take this time off before the date of the child's placement for adoption. Managers may ask employees to provide proof of the date and time of appointments (for example, a letter or email from the adoption agency).

34. Ordinary Parental Leave

34.1 Under current legislation, all employees who are the legal parent of a child aged under 18 can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid ordinary parental leave (OPL). They can take this before, or on the date of, the child's 18th birthday.

34.2 OPL is not the same as Shared Parental Leave.

34.3 Southwark Council are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with children is important, and so have improved on the legal entitlement. Eligible employees can take unpaid Ordinary Parental Leave to care for their child, including looking after the child during school holidays, or when they are unwell.

34.4 In Southwark Council, ordinary parental leave may be taken flexibly:

- In a single block of 18 weeks
- A day, or a week, at a time over the 18 years
- In a number of shorter periods of a minimum of half a day
- By using some or all of the 18 weeks unpaid leave to reduce their working hours or change their working pattern for a period of time.

34.5 Further details are in the [parental leave \(unpaid\)](#) policy

Section Six: Employment break scheme

35. Employment break scheme

35.1 Southwark Council has an employment break scheme which is available to employees who have at least one year's continuous service with Southwark Council as at 11th week before the expected week of childbirth or as at 11th week before being advised of the match for adoption.

35.2 There is no requirement to repay any maternity/adoption pay which has been paid, if an employee decides not to return at the end of the maternity/adoption leave period, or extend their time away from the workplace. However, they are not guaranteed to be able to return to the same job.

- 35.3 The scheme allows for a break of up to three years, although this can be extended to a maximum of five years from the date that the maternity/adoption leave commences.
- 35.4 It is important to note that an employment break does **not count as reckonable continuous service and will not count in length-of-service pensions calculations**. Employees may, however, 'buy back' service for pension purposes on their return - under the Local Government Pension Scheme a break of up to 36 months can be bought back.
- 35.5 Employees who wish to take a break for more than 3 years are advised to seek advice from the Pensions Service on the impact to them and their future pension entitlements before any final decision is taken.
- 35.6 On return from an employment break, previous Southwark Council service will be recognised for the purposes of annual leave, sick pay and maternity/adoption leave, as long as no paid employment has been undertaken in that period.
- 35.7 Responsibility for employees on the employment break scheme rests with an assigned manager who will:
- Ensure that appropriate and relevant information is provided to the employee on an employment break to enable their effective transition back to council employment
 - Be clear on the expectations on the person to maintain professional continuing development, as appropriate, during the employment break. This will vary between posts and where appropriate/ practical could include inviting people on employment breaks to training courses/ workshops.
- 35.8 Employees who are ready to return must give at least 3 months' notice and will be considered for vacant posts which are substantially similar to the post at departure. Where there are no such vacant posts, priority consideration will be given to any post at the same grade and carrying out the same type of work as that undertaken prior to the employment break.
- 35.9 If an employee is not successful, or refuses, three offers of priority consideration, the council is under no obligation to make any further offers and the arrangement ceases.
- 35.10 More information is available in the [employment break scheme](#) policy.

Section Seven: Shared parental leave and pay

36. Right to share parental leave

- 36.1 Parents can share up to 50 weeks of maternity/adoption leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them – the first two weeks of maternity leave are compulsory and must be taken by the person who gives birth, so cannot be shared.
- 36.2 This right applies to employees of the council, if they are the person giving birth or their spouse/partner. It is available to both partners if they are:
- having a baby
 - using a surrogate to have a baby
 - adopting a child
 - fostering a child who they are planning to adopt
- 36.3 Parents can share the pay and leave in the first year after the child is born or placed with the family.
- 36.4 Parents can use shared parental leave to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or take it all in one go. They can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.
- 36.5 If the person giving birth is employed by the council, but not the spouse/partner, the spouse/partner must notify their own employer of their wish to take shared parental leave.
- 36.6 If the spouse/partner is employed by the council, but not the person who gives birth, the person who gives birth must notify their own employer of their wish to share their parental leave.
- 36.7 Employees and managers should, where possible, have an informal discussion prior to employees giving formal notification of their intention to take shared parental leave, so that statutory entitlements to other types of leave and pay can be discussed, and to ensure that plans for any discontinuous periods of leave can be considered as early as possible.
- 36.8 Shared parental leave is in addition to the right to two weeks' paid maternity support leave for fathers and spouses/partners (see Section Four). If an employee also wishes to take maternity support leave, they must do so before taking any shared parental leave.

37. Shared parental pay (ShPP)

- 37.1 Employees taking shared parental leave are entitled to share the maternity/adoption pay entitlements as detailed in Sections One and Two.

37.2 To be eligible for shared parental leave and pay, the employee must have been employed continuously in local government for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date.

37.3 Details of the procedure and entitlements to shared parental leave and shared parental pay can be found by following [this link](#) or on the government [website](#)

Section Eight: Carers' leave

38. Scope

38.1 Carers' leave entitlements do not relate to routine childcare responsibilities but recognise that employees with significant caring responsibilities may need additional support when caring for disabled children or dependent adults.

39. Paid and unpaid time off

39.1 Employees who are carers are entitled to take up to 1 week a year (pro rata) paid time off to support family members and adult dependants.

39.2 Employees also have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to assist or make arrangements for the care of their dependants. Employees who wish to take time off for dependants should refer to the council's [special leave policy](#).

40. Flexible working to assist caring responsibilities

40.1 Employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have a right to request flexible working. See Section Eleven and, for further information on flexible working requests, please refer to the policy on [flexible working](#).

41. Emergency/crisis situations

41.1 It is recognised that employees with caring responsibilities cannot always plan for time they may need to take to care for their dependants and may need to take time off work at short notice in an emergency situation.

41.2 There is a statutory right to take unpaid time off to care for dependants which is including in the [special leave policy](#).

Section Nine: Fertility treatment

42. Time off for fertility treatment

- 42.1 Flexible working can be used to enable an employee to manage appointments during fertility treatment, although the council recognises that some time off may also be required. Paid time off for up to three days a year for fertility treatment may be granted.
- 42.2 An employee who wishes to apply for time off for fertility treatment including in vitro fertilisation (IVF) must:
- inform their line manager as soon as their plans to undergo fertility treatment have been confirmed;
 - produce an appointment card if requested for each occasion on which time off is required;
 - try to arrange appointments at times that will cause the minimum amount of inconvenience to the workplace;
 - and
 - give as much notice as possible of the days on which time off is required.
- 42.3 Any information provided to the line manager will be maintained in strict confidence.
- 42.4 Sickness absence that results from fertility treatment should be recorded as sickness absence in the normal way. Only sickness absence due to pregnancy can be recorded as pregnancy-related sickness absence.

Section Ten: Fostering leave

43. Foster carers

- 43.1 This policy applies to staff who:
- are applying to become foster carers;
 - or
 - are approved foster carers and have a child in placement or are an approved kinship carer.
- 43.2 Southwark Council values and will support registered foster carers by giving paid time off of up to two weeks in any 12 month period to help with the settling in, or care, of looked after children in their care (pro-rata based on an employee's full time equivalent working time). Full details can be found in the [fostering friendly policy](#).

Section Eleven: Flexible working

44. Flexible working

44.1 Employees may be able to work flexibly in order to support their family needs and achieve a work life balance, and the council supports parents with childcare commitments and those with other caring commitments.

44.2 There are a number of flexible working opportunities available including:

- the flexitime scheme (available to those below Grade 14)
- part time working
- job sharing
- compressed working week
- flexi-break scheme (term time only working)
- flexible retirement (see Section Twelve)
- home working
- hybrid working – working remotely, or at home, for part of the time and partly office based

44.3 Details can be found here - [flexible working policy](#)

45. Right to request flexible working

45.1 Employees have a statutory right to ask to work flexibly, providing they have at least 26 weeks' service.

45.2 This could be a change to the hours worked such as annualised hours or compressed hours as well as working from home or another place of work.

45.3 Details are on The Source - [Statutory right to request flexible working](#) - and also on the official [Government website](#).

Section Twelve: Flexible retirement

46. Changing hours of work

46.1 Flexible retirement can enable an employee to reduce their working hours or move to a less senior position in advance of normal retirement age. It can be used to help an employee with caring responsibilities.

46.2 Employees have a right to request flexible retirement if they are aged 55 or above, and requests will be considered by the council.

46.3 Further information can be found in the [Flexible Retirement Policy](#).

Section Thirteen: Bereavement leave

47. Bereavement leave

47.1 Most people will experience the death of a person close to them during their working lives. Grief is a natural response when people experience a death (a bereavement). It can affect someone in several ways and can impact on their ability to do their work.

47.2 Under the [special leave policy](#) in Southwark Council, paid bereavement leave is available following the death of a spouse/partner or close family member, for between one and three days to make funeral arrangements, plus time to attend the funeral, including journey time. Bereavement leave may be granted for a longer period but would normally be unpaid.

Section Fourteen: Related documents

- [Special leave policy](#)
- [Flexible retirement policy](#)
- [Right to request flexible working](#)
- [Fostering friendly policy](#)
- [Health and safety during pregnancy guidance](#)
- [Premature births and miscarriages policy](#)
- [Parental bereavement leave policy](#)
- [Special leave for dependants](#)
- [Shared parental leave](#)
- [Performance management](#)
- [Maternity and pregnancy related sickness absence](#)
- [Reorganisation and redundancy](#)
- [Maternity leave and pay](#)
- [Family friendly policy frequently asked questions \(new link\)](#)
- [Time off for appointments](#)
- [Right to return to work](#)
- [Maternity and adoption support leave \(new link\)](#)
- [Childcare loan](#)
- [Local Government Pension Scheme](#)

External sources of help

Working Families – <https://workingfamilies.org.uk/>

Benefits and financial support for families – <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families>

Southwark Council advice and support for families –
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/childcare-and-parenting/advice-and-support-for-families>

Version Control

Live Policy:	Family Friendly Policies
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