

Carers’ Leave Policy

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**EAST AYRSHIRE LEISURE**

**CARERS’ LEAVE POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** The Carers’ Leave Scheme enhances the support and assistance available to employees who have the responsibility of caring for a family member or dependant who is ill for an extended period.

**1.2** East Ayrshire Leisure acknowledges that many of its employees have to deal with the daily demands of caring for dependants and dealing with emergency situations. However, from time to time employees may find the need to provide long term care for a seriously ill dependant. The Carers’ Leave Scheme provides a period of leave, the cost of which can be spread over an agreed period of time to lessen the financial impact.

**1.3** The following leave provisions should provide employees with good solutions to meet their caring responsibilities. They aim to encourage managers and employees to have open and honest discussions and to resolve these difficulties in a mutually acceptable manner and a flexible approach should be considered to support the employee to balance work and caring responsibilities.

**1.4** East Ayrshire Leisure has a Special Leave Scheme covering time off for circumstances such as the sudden and unexpected illness of a near relative or dependant or the emergency hospitalisation of a near relative or dependant. However, the Special Leave Scheme does not specifically cover leave for long term care of a near relative or dependant.

**1.5** East Ayrshire Leisure recognises that from time to time employees will need to try to balance work and caring responsibilities and seeks to provide this support for employees. The provision of Carers’ Leave means that some employees may be able to remain in employment where they would otherwise have needed to resign to provide care to a dependant. East Ayrshire Leisure benefits from the application of the Scheme by retaining skills, knowledge and experience and improving employee wellbeing, resulting in improved engagement, loyalty and retention.

**2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

**2.1** The Scheme aims to:

* provide an opportunity for employees to balance work and caring responsibilities.
* reduce the number of employees who require to terminate their employment with East Ayrshire Leisure to provide care for dependents.
* encourage employees with caring responsibilities to discuss any issues with their Manager at the earliest convenience.

**2.2** The Scheme applies to all East Ayrshire Leisure Employees, and is not intended to replace the Special Leave Policy.

**2.3** Any employee who leaves East Ayrshire Leisure’s service before the full amount owed in respect of salary deductions is repaid, will have any remaining balance deducted from their final pay. Where the full amount cannot be deducted from an employee’s final pay then they will be issued with the appropriate account for the balance owed.

**2.4** Employees can be accompanied by their Trade Union Representative or work colleague as appropriate during any discussions with their Manager relating to caring responsibilities.

**3. DEFINITION OF A DEPENDANT**

**3.1** A dependant is any individual who depends or relies on the employee concerned for support, aid or financial assistance.

**4. SCHEME DETAILS**

**4.1** There may be occasions when an employee requires to use the Carers’ Leave Scheme to care for a dependent. It may not always be appropriate or possible to use annual leave. Employees will not be required to use annual leave before taking any leave under the Carers’ Leave Scheme. The circumstances may vary, but could include:-

* Time off to care for a dependant recovering from surgery/hospital stay
* Time off while a dependant is in hospital
* Time off to care for a dependant who is terminally ill
* Time off to provide respite care

**4.2** Carers’ Leave is considered special unpaid time off work where an employee is unable to attend work as a result of their need to care on a long term basis for a dependant as defined in 3.1 above.

**4.3** Carers’ Leave can be up to a maximum period of twelve weeks in any 12 months. Time can be requested in individual blocks of no less than one week.

**4.4** The period of unpaid leave can be an immediate deduction from the employee’s salary or the employee has the option for deductions from their salary over an extended period of time up to a maximum of 12 months from the date of commencement of the Carers’ Leave.

**4.5** In line with East Ayrshire Leisure’s Special Leave Scheme, Carers’ Leave will not be available until the employee has one year’s continuous service from the date of commencement of the Carers’ Leave.

**4.6** A minimum of 2 weeks’ written notice from the employee concerned is required to allow sufficient time for operational arrangements to be made. In exceptional circumstances, applications may be accepted within this period.

**4.7** All Carers’ Leave granted will be counted as continuous service for contractual purposes.

**4.8** Carers’ Leave should normally be granted. However in exceptional circumstances where services would be unduly disrupted if leave were taken during the period identified, the leave may be refused or postponed.

**5 APPLICATION PROCESS**

**5.1** If an employee wishes to request Carers’ Leave, they must complete the Carers’ Leave form, Appendix 1, giving at least 2 weeks’ written notice

**5.2** Forms should be forwarded to their Line Manager in the first instance who will discuss with the relevant Development Manager prior to authorisation.

**5.3** The employee must decide how salary deductions will be taken (e.g. single deduction, or spread over a period of months / pay periods as appropriate). Employees will have flexibility on how they wish to repay the salary balance due within the 1 year period concerned.

**6. PENSION SCHEMES**

**6.1 Local Government Pension Scheme**

When an employee of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Strathclyde Pension Fund) opts **to spread the repayment of the unpaid leave period**, **pension contributions will continue to be made during this period by both employer and employee.**

**6.2** When an employee of the Local Government Pension Scheme opts to take an **immediate deduction** and **does not wish to spread the repayment** ie take a single period of unpaid leave unpaid, **pension contributions will cease during this period by both employer and employee.**

**6.3** Under the **Local Government Pension Scheme** employees can make arrangements to recover (buy back) lost pension, through the purchase of Additional Pension Contributions (APC’s) if they have chosen not to spread the repayment of the unpaid leave period. It is the responsibility of the employee to make the arrangements within one month of their return to work. The employer will make contributions when the employee purchases APC’s.

**7. SUPPORT**

**7.1** Additional money advice and support can be obtained from Citizens Advice Bureau or Trade Unions, as appropriate.

**8. APPEAL PROCEDURE**

**8.1** Where an employee is dissatisfied with any application of the Carers’ Leave Scheme then they may raise a grievance under East Ayrshire Leisure’s Grievance Procedure in the usual way.

**9. REVIEW**

**9.1** The Policy and Procedures will be subject to an annual desktop review to assess whether a more detailed review is required. The desktop review will take account of operational experience or impending legislative changes.

**Record of Change**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date Reviewed** | **Date of next review** |
| Aug 2020 | Aug 2021 |

 **APPLICATION FOR CARERS’ LEAVE**

Appendix 1

**To: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Note to Employee:**

All applications for Carers’ Leave are subject to the exigencies of the service except in situations of an unexpected or emergency nature. Before applying for Carers’ Leave, you should familiarise yourself with the contents of the Carers’ Leave Scheme. Carers’ Leave granted will be recorded as authorised absence on your attendance record card.

1. I wish to apply for a period of Carers’ Leave from ….……….…… to ……………….…..…………..

inclusive, for the following reason (s):

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

\* Delete as appropriate i.e. **a OR b**

**a)** \* I request that I repay this salary to East Ayrshire Leisure up to a maximum repayment period of 1 year from the commencement of the Carers’ Leave.

I wish to repay over a period of ……………... months / pay periods

**OR**

**b)** \* I request that full salary reduction is applied during Carers’ leave, and do not wish to repay any salary over the extended period. I understand that no Pension contributions will be made by myself or East Ayrshire Leisure during this period of unpaid leave. **(Please refer to Section 6 of the Policy prior to signing).**

I understand and accept that full monies will be recovered from my final salary should I leave East Ayrshire Leisure prior to the completion of my repayments.

Name …………………………………………..……

Section………………………………………………

Employee No……………………………………….

Designation…………………………………………

Signature……………………………………………

Date…………………………………..……………

2. Your request for a period of Carers’ Leave from …………… to ……………inclusive, **has been\* OR has not been\*** approved as detailed above. **(\*delete as appropriate)**

If refused, please state reason: ………………………………………………………………………………..……………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Name……………………………………………..…

Designation………………………………………….

Signature…………………………………………….

Date…………………………………………………

Please return the fully **completed form** to Human Resources, Dower House, Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock, KA3 1XB