

Foster Care Leave Policy and Procedure

Policy Owner	Director of HR	Policy Author	HR Manager
Approved By	The Executive	Date Approved	April 2024
Status	Approved	Impact Assessment	Yes
Version	2	Date of Next Review	April 2027

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Date
1	Creation of Policy	September 2018
1.1	Policy has been updated into new standard template and Policy owner has been updated from Director of HR to HR Manager.	August 2022
2	Reviewed wording and minor amendments made such as updated links and contact / employee helpline details.	August 2023

Foster Care Leave

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University aims to support all employees in achieving a healthy work/life balance, recognising that many employees may need a range of support regarding their family responsibilities. As such the University has built on its statutory obligations and developed a number of [flexible family friendly policies](#) which are available to all staff irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation.
- 1.2 For further advice and information on this policy or any of the University's other family friendly policies, please contact your [HR Advisor/HR Assistant](#).

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy sets out the rights of employees who are caring for, or intend to care for, a child or children under a foster care arrangement with a local authority. This policy outlines the process employees and managers should follow and ensures a consistent and fair approach in line with legislative requirements and commitment to best practice.
- 2.2 Foster care leave normally does not apply to the short or long term care of children who are family members.
- 2.3 If an employee is fostering for adoption, they will become eligible for adoption pay and leave from when the child comes to live with them and should refer to the University's [Adoption and Surrogacy Leave Policy/Procedure](#).

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 To be eligible for Foster Care Leave employees must have been continuously employed by the University for at least 26 weeks prior to the requested period of leave.

3.2 An employee who wishes to take foster care leave should:

- 3.2.1 give their line manager not less than 4 weeks' notice of their intention to train as a foster carer;
- 3.2.2 provide official documentation to their line manager that confirms their intention to become a foster carer under a local authority arrangement;
- 3.2.3 specify the period of time off that they require for this purpose;
- 3.2.4 produce proof of appointment for each occasion on which time off is requested (if asked for by line manager);
- 3.2.5 try to arrange any appointments at times that will minimise disruption to the department/school.

3.3 Kinship Care Leave

- 3.3.1 Kinship Care Leave may be available to employees who are caring for children of very close relatives who would otherwise have to be fostered or go into local authority care. If an employee is in this situation, they are eligible to the same entitlements as specified in this policy.

4. Entitlement

- 4.1 While there is no statutory right to time off work to care for foster children, the University recognises that employees who are undertaking foster care responsibilities for a child or children may need to take time off work to help them settle into their new environment. Employees may also need time off to attend training courses, meetings with professionals or appointments with the child or children.

- 4.2 As such, employees are entitled to take a total of up to 5 days (pro-rated for part time staff) paid leave for the above purposes during the University's annual leave calendar. Time off can be requested as a single block, full days, or half days.

5. Notification

- 5.1 If an employee requires leave for foster care purposes, they should notify their manager at the earliest opportunity by completing a [Foster Care Leave Request Form](#) stating the period of leave they wish to request and provide official documentation to confirm the arrangement. On approval the manager will send the completed form and documentation to the HR Department and the Payroll Department.
- 5.2 If an employee requires an extended period of time off to care for a new foster child/child, they may be permitted to take time off using annual or unpaid leave.

6. Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required.

APPENDIX 1: FOSTER CARE LEAVE FAQs

1. What other support does the University offer?

The University is committed to helping working parents and carers and offers a variety of family friendly benefits and flexible arrangements. Policies and procedures within the suite of family friendly include: maternity leave and pay, paternity/supporting partner leave and pay, adoption/surrogacy leave and pay, shared parental leave, and pay, parental leave, fertility treatment leave and pay, foster care leave, and pay and time off for dependents. In addition, the University offers:

Childcare Facilities

The Treehouse Early Care Centre is a purpose build facility based on the University Campus. It provides high quality care and education for children aged 3 months to 5 years during Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 6pm.

Employees may be eligible to salary sacrifice part of their salary for the full cost of their childcare place, saving between 30% and 42% depending on the tax rate.

Employees are advised to submit applications to their preferred nursery provider(s) as early as possible as places are normally reserved very quickly.

Kings Camps is a holiday childcare provider (OFSTED-registered) which operate from RGU: SPORT on the University campus during the Easter, Summer, and October holidays. University Employees can book in advance to spread the cost and currently receive a discount.

Further information and contact details can be found at [Supporting Working Parents](#).

Employees will also find information here on childcare support including the [Governments Tax Free Childcare scheme](#).

Flexible Working

The University's flexible working scheme can help achieve a better work-life balance and enable employees to develop a work pattern that suits their family commitments. For more information please refer to the University's [Flexible Working Scheme](#).

University Support Helpline

The University recognises that employees may need confidential independent help, information, and guidance. For that reason a 24 hour confidential support [employee helpline](#) is available to employees and their family members to access via Telus Health (formerly LifeWorks). Professionals are available to answer queries on a wide range of practical and more sensitive issues and the service offers: life support, legal information, bereavement assistance, medical information, a wellbeing portal, and online CBT.