

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Version Number	Issue 5
Date Revision Complete	4 November 2016
Policy Owner	Head of HR & OD
Author	Human Resources Officer
Reason for Revision	Standard periodic review including changes in legislation.
Data Protection	Yes
Proof Read	Yes - Human Resources Team and Law at Work
Date Approved	November 2016
Approved by	EMT
Next Review Due	November 2019

Audience – Training and Awareness Method	Roll out to of review and update to all managers. Training will be provided when needed.
Effective Date	November 2016

Internal References	Blackwood Family Friendly Policies
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External References	ACAS - http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1637
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Comments	
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PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Blackwood is committed to supporting working parents and flexible working wherever possible. This document outlines the policy in regard to Parental Leave and is part of a range of family friendly policies adopted by Blackwood. Parental leave is the right to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.

2. PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 Access to Parental leave is the right of all employees with one year's continuous service who are either the mother or father of their own child or an adopted child, or have acquired formal parenting responsibilities for a child under 18 years of age. They must have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child.

- 2.2 Parental leave entitlement is as follows:

- Each parent can take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave,
- This entitlement is for each child
- The leave must be taken before the eighteenth birthday of the child leave can be taken in blocks of one week up to a maximum of four weeks **per annum**, except in case of parents of disabled children who can take leave in blocks of one day. A disabled child is defined as being where there is a disability living allowance entitlement.
- Leave taken with previous employers will count towards calculating the maximum entitlement.
- Part-time Employees are entitled to parental leave on a pro-rata basis.

3. KEY OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Reasons for Leave

- 3.1.2 Parental leave can be taken for the reasons of caring for a child or children or making arrangements for their welfare. Examples of the way that leave could be used include, but are not limited to:

- to spend more time with a child during its early years
- to accompany a child during a hospital stay
- reviewing new schools
- settling a child into new school or childcare arrangements
- to enable a family to spend more time together

- 3.1.3 Parental leave should not be taken for reasons other than the care and welfare of the child. Any abuse of this may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

3.2 **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

- 3.2.1 There is no entitlement to pay during Parental Leave.
- 3.2.2 Normal contractual annual leave entitlement will accrue during parental leave. During the parental leave, employees will not be entitled to other employment benefits other than those specified in the employment contract.
- 3.2.3 On return to work from parental leave the employee will return to the same job, unless the period of parental leave is taken following maternity leave and in this case the employee will be entitled to return to a similar role. Please refer to the Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave Policies for further information.

3.3 **Procedure**

- 3.3.1 The employee must request parental leave in writing giving at least 21 days' notice of the dates on which they wish the leave to be taken
- 3.3.2 Note that Blackwood may require an Employee to provide a birth or adoption certificate or other evidence of legal parental responsibilities or a child's entitlement to disability living allowance prior to leave being granted. Any Employee who is identified as misusing this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 3.3.3 Where the leave is granted, the employee should be advised within 7 days of the request.
- 3.3.4 Blackwood has the right to postpone the leave for up to 6 months where this would result in a substantial disruption to the business or the service provision, although it will endeavour to be as flexible as possible. Postponement is not possible where the leave is booked following the birth or adoption of the child or where it means an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave, eg postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday
- 3.4.5 Expectant fathers may request up to 4 weeks parental leave to follow the birth of their child by providing 21 days' notice of the days required.
- 3.4.6 Where the leave is to be postponed due to a substantial disruption to the business or service provision, the employee will be notified within 7 days.

3.5 **Monitoring and Review**

- 3.5.1 Employees will be asked to declare the amount of Parental Leave taken during employment with previous employers. Requests may be made for previous employers to confirm this when an employee joins Blackwood.
- 3.5.2 Levels of parental leave will be recorded and monitored using the Employee Leave Record Form.
- 3.5.3 Where employees leave their employment, details of parental leave used will be provided to new employers where this information is requested.

3.6 **Related Policies and Procedures**

3.6.1 A range of family friendly policies have been adopted by Blackwood. Parents and carers should make reference to the following policies for further information on balancing their work and home life: Maternity Policy, , Paternity Policy, Shared Parental Leave Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Home Working, Adoption Policy, and Time off for Dependents Policy.

3.7 **Equality and Diversity**

3.7.1 Blackwood will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability. Blackwood aims to promote equality of opportunity for all and complies with the current legal requirements in relation to equality and diversity issues.

3.7.2 Employees are protected from suffering unfair treatment or dismissal for taking or seeking to take parental leave. Employees who believe they have been treated unfairly should raise the matter through Blackwood's Grievance process.

4. **REVIEW**

4.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless required sooner by legal or best practice developments.