

# WORK LIFE BALANCE

**Overview of the policies, procedures, contract arrangements and schemes available to support employees work life balance**

This document applies to all County Council employees – some of the specific policies referred to may have exceptions for:

- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue where the substantive policy has not been adopted
- Chief Officers (the corporate management team, CMT)
- School-based employees

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## INTRODUCTION

Lincolnshire County Council recognises the importance of helping employees find practical ways to balance their work and home life. This document outlines the range of policies and procedures available that enable employees to balance their working life with other priorities, including parental and other caring responsibilities, lifelong learning opportunities, leisure activities and other interests.

In all cases this is about finding practical solutions that work for the organisation and the individual.

## OBJECTIVES

This document sets out the different policies, procedures and arrangements in place within the county council for employees to use to support work life balance.

## THE BUSINESS NEED

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns. Flexible working is not about working less but working differently, however both management and employees need to be realistic and recognise that different flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the organisation.

The Business case for improved work life balance includes:

- having a more motivated, productive workforce
- increased employee satisfaction and engagement

- retaining valued employees and their skills
- maximised available labour and workplace/facilities
- potential for staffing over a wide range of hours, potentially creating a more flexible service
- attracting a wider range of candidates, such as older part-time workers and those that care for others
- support diversity and equality policy and objectives
- reduced absenteeism
- the reputation of being an employer of choice

The policies and arrangements available within the Council are there to help create a balance – it is not about never working over your hours or undertaking extra duties, but it is about working in a smarter way, and avoiding a presenteeism culture by measuring the outcomes of what is delivered rather than measuring the input or process.

Employees applying for flexible working need to recognise that the arrangements need to fit business requirements, and managers in turn need to consider requests fully and with consistency.

## **WHAT IS IN PLACE TO SUPPORT WORK LIFE BALANCE**

Policies, procedures and schemes in place to support work life balance include:

- Flexible Working Policy:
  - V-Time
  - Job Share
  - Flexible Working Hours Scheme
  - Part Time Working
  - Part Year Working
- Homeworking/Teleworking
- Employment Break Policy
- Maternity Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Maternity Support Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Special Leave
- Parental Leave
- Leave For Family or Personal Reasons
- Childcare Vouchers
- Employee Support and Counselling
- Occupational Health
- Health and Safety

## **FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY**

A flexible working policy and procedure is in place to enable all employees to apply for flexible working.

Each service is different and the procedure enables full discussions between employees and line managers to develop their own approaches to flexible working to reflect the need of the individual, the service, their customers and teams.

The different means of flexible working set out in the policy include:

**V time:** This scheme enables employees to apply to voluntarily reduce their hours of work on a temporary basis with their pay adjusted accordingly.

**Job share:** Job-sharing is a formal/contractual arrangement where two people voluntarily share the duties and responsibilities of one job and also share the pay and benefits, where appropriate, of that job in proportion to the hours they each work. Job sharing may encourage diversity of the workforce but is not positive action. In a job-share post, the contract will specify the conditions and hours that will be carried out by each person.

**Flexible Working hours scheme :** This scheme is used to reduce the rigidity of set office hours thus enabling staff to adjust their working day, within certain limits, according to personal choice and convenience and at the same time improve service delivery.

**Part-Time Working - :** This a contractual arrangement which sets out the days and/or hours that an employee will work, which are below the average working hours for that type of work.

**Part-Year Working - :** This a contractual arrangement which sets out the specific periods of work, or hours of work for the year eg term time contracts employ people for the weeks in line with school term times and therefore benefit those with childcare responsibilities, and benefit service areas where work loads are greatly reduced during this period.

### **Statutory Provisions**

Whilst the Council's policy on flexible working applies to all employees, parents of a child under 6 (18 in the case of a disabled child), and, with effect from 1st April 2007 carers of adults, subject to qualification criteria, have the right to apply to work flexibly. Please see the flexible working policy for further details.

## **HOMEWORKING**

This is a type of flexible working where an employee's place of work is in the home. Arrangements may be formal or informal.

Informal arrangements should be short term only, e.g. to enable an employee to work undisturbed at home on a particular project, or to cater for the short term personal needs of an employee.

Formal arrangements may include working part of the week at home and part in the office or working from satellite offices or work centres. There may be a range of jobs that are suited to home-working. It is most widely used where a job can be done with a personal computer, fax machine, modem and telephone.

## **EMPLOYMENT BREAK POLICY**

The Council has in place an Employment Break Scheme (available for employees with at least two years service) which enables employees to apply for breaks of employment in certain circumstances such as for caring responsibilities, or for personal development.

## **MATERNITY LEAVE**

The Maternity guidelines for employees and the guidelines for managers detail employees' rights, entitlement, procedure for claiming entitlements, and the

responsibilities of Employees taking maternity leave, Managers and Human Resources.

## **ADOPTION LEAVE**

The scheme aims to assist employees who adopt a child and to allow them to be with the child for a settling in period. This policy applies to anyone placed with a child any time after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

## **MATERNITY SUPPORT LEAVE**

This is a minimum entitlement of a week's paid leave for the child's father, civil partner, the partner or a nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of the birth. See [Leave to Attend to Parental, Caring and Other Family Needs or for Personal Reasons](#) for full details and [Maternity Support Leave Form](#) to apply for this leave. There are no qualifying conditions for this leave.

## **PATERNITY LEAVE**

If you qualify for Maternity Support Leave as well as Statutory Paternity Leave you will receive one week's Maternity Support Leave at full pay and one week's statutory paternity leave at the standard SPP rate.

This is a statutory right to take one or two weeks consecutive leave at or around the time of the birth for the father of the expected child, adoptive father or mothers husband or partner.

Qualifying conditions apply, which if met may entitle to employee to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP).

## **SPECIAL LEAVE**

A special leave policy is in place which set out provisions to attend to family care, to enable employees with parental or caring responsibilities to address commitments outside work which are likely to have a bearing on their well-being and ability to perform their duties.

## **PARENTAL LEAVE**

This leave is for parents with children under 5 or under 18 if they have a disability. By parents, we mean those of you who have legal parental responsibility, whether you're a mother, a father or a legal guardian.

Parental leave is unpaid leave, but it gives you the opportunity to take time away from your job to spend with your children.

## **LEAVE FOR FAMILY OR PERSONAL REASONS**

Leave with pay may be approved for those occasions when you need time off for family or personal reasons.

This may be for:

- Reasons where there has been a close relationship with someone who has died, is ill, is injured or assaulted, or gives birth
- Specific caring responsibilities
- Family emergencies
- Personal reasons

See the full policy for full details of when this leave may be appropriate.

## **CHILDCARE VOUCHERS**

The Council has a childcare vouchers scheme in place. This enables working parents to have a proportion of their salary paid in childcare vouchers, which are then used to pay their childcare provider. This has the benefit of saving employees money as they do not pay National insurance or income tax on the part of the salary they take in vouchers.

Please see [Childcare Voucher information](#) for further information and an application form.

## **EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING**

Lincolnshire county council has an Employee Support and counselling service which all employees can use to get confidential assistance with personal or work related problems.

This service also has access to a wide range of range practical assistance and outside organisations who can offer advice and support.

You can contact this service by telephone, email or post:

Telephone; 01522 836198

Email; [emp.support@hbs.uk.com](mailto:emp.support@hbs.uk.com)

Post; Employee Support and Counselling Service  
Mill House  
Brayford Wharf north  
Lincoln  
LN1 1YT

## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

The Council has an Occupational Health Provider to help it to ensure employees are medically suitable for their work and that the working environment is suitable for employees.

Various health promotion events are run each year to highlight the importance of employee wellbeing in LCC.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

A number of information leaflets and policies have been established to support the health and safety of all employees working flexibly or from home. These include:

[G30 Homeworking](#)

[G30.1A Home Workplace Risk Assessment](#)

[G30.1B Using Electrical Equipment at Home](#)

[G18 Electricity at Work Regulations](#)

[G23 Working Alone](#)

## **FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT**

The council has in place a flexible retirement policy to support employees of minimum retirement age to voluntarily reduce their grade and/or hours of work, on a permanent basis with adjustment to pay, coupled with receipt of pension.

Voluntary reduction can be achieved in a number of ways:

- reducing the hours on a number of, or, every working day
- reducing the number of days worked in the week
- moving to a lower grade post by appointment on merit.

## **BENEFITS**

Flexible retirement policies will help:

- to retain valuable employees who would otherwise leave their job
- to enable employees to balance work with other responsibilities or leisure time
- to enable employees to retire on a gradual basis

Please see the Age retirement and Flexible retirement policies for further information.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Please contact Human Resources.

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