

CITIZENS ADVICE REIGATE AND BANSTEAD PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Purpose and scope

Parental leave is the right to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare.

Parental leave is pre-planned time off for childcare. Arrangements for short-term leave due to an emergency relating to a dependant are not covered by this policy. Provisions for dependant leave are covered in the Special Leave policy.

This policy applies to paid staff.

2. Eligibility

Employees are entitled to parental leave if they are the parent or adoptive parent of a child under the age of five, or a disabled child under the age of eighteen, and have completed one year's service with Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead by the time they want to take the leave. Both male and female parents can take parental leave.

Subject to notification requirements, employees can choose to take parental leave any time:

- up until the child's fifth birthday;
- in adoption cases, for five years after the child is first placed with the family for adoption (or until the child's 18th birthday if that comes sooner);
- in the case of a disabled child, up until the child's 18th birthday (for the purposes of parental leave, a disabled child is one for whom disability living allowance has been awarded).

3. Duration

Employees are entitled to 18 weeks' parental leave in total for each child.

Parental leave is for each child, so, for example, if an employee has two children under the age of five, he or she may take 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child.

Employees are able to take parental leave in short or long blocks as agreed with the Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead CEO, however the following provisions apply:

- leave must be taken in blocks of one week, with the exception that parents of disabled children can take leave in multiples of one day;
- a maximum of 4 weeks' parental leave in a year can be taken in respect of any individual child;
- Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead can postpone the leave for up to 6 months where the business would be particularly disrupted if the leave were taken at the time requested. However, leave cannot be postponed when the employee gives notice to take it immediately after the time the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

4. Procedure

The employee should apply in writing to Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead CEO stating their intention to request parental leave. This letter should include:

- the child's date of birth or adoption (either actual or predicted);
- details of the leave period being requested.

A minimum of 21 days' notice must be given when requesting parental leave.

Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead CEO will establish the employee's entitlement to take parental leave and will confirm in writing to the employee the agreed period of leave. This should be done within one week of receiving the request and a copy placed in the employee's personnel file.

Requests for parental leave will normally be granted. However, business requirements such as high absence or pre-booked holidays or occasions when the leave would unduly harm Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead operations may create circumstances where the requested leave cannot be granted.

If the leave request cannot be granted, it can be postponed for up to 6 months. In this instance Citizens Advice Reigate and Banstead CEO would discuss this with the employee, stating the reasons for the leave being postponed and setting out the new dates (of the same duration) during which leave can be granted. This should be confirmed in writing within one week of receiving the request and a copy placed in the employee's file.

5. Return to work

At the end of parental leave the employee is entitled to return to the same job provided that the leave was for a period of four weeks or less and did not follow on immediately from a period of additional maternity / paternity / adoption leave. If the period of parental leave is longer than four weeks or follows on immediately from a period of additional maternity / paternity / adoption leave, the employee will be entitled to return to the same job or, if that is not practicable, to a similar job that has the same or better terms and conditions as the previous job.

6. Terms and conditions whilst on parental leave

Parental leave is unpaid. All other employment or contractual benefits, apart from remuneration, are maintained during parental leave periods. The time spent on parental leave counts as continuous employment.