

**THE HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

**Maternity, Adoption and Parental Leave Policy**

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### **Introduction**

The Board recognises the value of its employees and the importance of managing appropriate maternity, adoption and parental leave provision, with reference to statutory regulations and national conditions of service. The effective management of maternity, adoption and parental leave supports the employee in their role as parent, carer or partner and the Board in the consistent provision of services during the employee's absence.

The Board recognises that, from time to time, employees may have questions or concerns relating to their maternity rights. The Board encourages open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. As details of the various provisions can be complex, employees should clarify the relevant procedures and provision with the Board's Personnel Adviser.

### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to establish the Board's support for employees on maternity, adoption and parental leave and to underpin guidance to support the effective management of these.

### **Types of provision**

#### **Maternity & Adoption Leave**

Maternity and Adoption leave and pay provide an opportunity for employees to take time off work when their child is born or starts to live with them.

#### **Maternity & Adoption Support Leave**

Maternity/Adoption Support leave provides an opportunity for employees, intending to be fully involved in the child's upbringing, to take time off to support the mother, adopter or carer for the child.

## **Parental Leave**

Eligible parents with children under the age of 18 years will be entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave up until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parental leave should be taken in blocks of a week or multiples of a week, and should not be taken as "odd" days off, unless the child is disabled. Employees cannot take off more than four weeks during a year per child. A week is based on an employees working pattern.

## **Shared Parental Leave**

Shared Parental Leave enables eligible parents to choose how to share time off work to care for their child during the first year of birth or adoption.

## **Guidance**

In relation to maternity, adoption and parental leave this guidance will:

- inform employees and managers about the provision of leave and pay;
- inform employees and managers about notification procedures;
- guide managers on the health, safety and wellbeing issues;
- guide managers and the requirement to keep in contact with employees during periods of leave;
- provide information on the impact of leave on various employment elements including annual leave, pensions and salary sacrifice benefits;
- provide guidance on an employee's right to return to work.

## **Legislation**

The development and application of this policy is guided by:

- Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3312)
- Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3050)