

Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:	Neo-natal Care Leave Policy and Procedure (created 2025)
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Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

In 2018 Staffing Committee approved changes to the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policies to incorporate additional leave for parents of premature babies in support of 'The Smallest Things' campaign (www.thesmallestthings.org). The additional leave consisted of one week of paid leave for each week that the baby spent in hospital, up until they will be full term (i.e. 38 weeks) for parents of pre-term (i.e. earlier than 37 weeks) babies who were required to spend additional time in hospital.

However this has recently been superseded by new statutory provisions covering Neo-natal Care (Neonatal Care Leave and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2025 and Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (General) Regulations 2025). As the Council already has a provision for some leave at full pay in some Neo-natal Care circumstances, it was agreed to simplify and enhance the statutory provisions which entitle employees to leave with reduced pay while their baby is undergoing care, for a maximum of 12 weeks. There is no requirement for a minimum level of service in order to be eligible.

Accordingly, the new Policy sets out the provision that where Neo-natal Care leave applies, the Council will enhance this to full pay for the period of hospital treatment up to a maximum of 12 weeks. This would be taken in blocks of one week in addition to any other statutory leave that the employee may be entitled to, such as maternity, adoption, paternity, or shared parental leave either at the end of maternity / adoption leave, or within 68 weeks of the child's date of birth.

The Council wishes to be recognised as an 'employer of choice' and the new People and Culture Strategy sets out a number of aims to support all colleagues to 'belong', bringing their best selves to work by developing and progressing a diverse workforce and a culture of belonging by going beyond minimum legal duties. This Policy aims to strengthen that

by supporting colleagues to take time off work at a time when they will need it most, to support their family without being concerned about loss of pay or using annual leave.

Lead officer: Alison Maxson

Stakeholders: HR/OD, Colleagues, Members (Staffing Committee)

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)	X		
Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment	X		

that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)			
Sex (male or female)		Enhances rights of parents of new babies with regard to time off to support their family, with no loss of pay	
Gender identity (gender reassignment)	X		
Religion and belief (including lack of belief)	X		
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)		Eligibility for leave is fully inclusive and therefore encompasses birth mothers, fathers, primary adopters and partners of primary adopters / birth mothers, including partners in same-sex couples where one partner has given birth or will be the child's primary adopter; or where the employee is in a relationship with the mother / primary adopter but not	

		actually the baby's father. Eligibility criteria are set out in full within the policy.	
Age (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)		Whilst the taking of Neonatal Care leave is not age-specific or age-restricted in any way, it is most likely to be of benefit to colleagues of prime child-rearing age i.e. 20-45	
Care Experienced (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council – for a period of 13 weeks or more – from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)	X		
Carers (people who care for others, informally or formally)		Enhances rights of parents of new babies with regard to time off to support their family, with no loss of pay	

Rural communities	X		
Areas of deprivation (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)		Enhances rights of parents of new babies with regard to time off to support their family, with no loss of pay	
Human rights (see guidance note for key areas to consider)		Enhances rights of parents of new babies with regard to time off to support their family, with no loss of pay	
Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)		Enhances rights of parents of new babies with regard to time off to support their family, with no loss of pay	
Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	X		

Evidence:

Neo-natal Care Leave Policy.docx

Neo-natal Care Leave Procedure.docx

Action plan:

Actions required	Priority	Outcomes required	Officer responsible	Review date
Monitor impact of policy and procedure		No unintended consequences/ adverse impacts on people based on personal characteristics	Alison Maxson	August 2028

Sign off	
Lead officer:	Alison Maxson
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Liz Chadwick
Moderation and/or Scrutiny	
Date: 15 August 2025	Virtual moderation by Moderation Sub Group
Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	August 2028

