

## Foster and Kinship Care policy

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## **Section 1: Overview**

### **1.1 Purpose**

**1.1.1** This policy is here to help you and us plan ahead when considering being a foster carer/parent. We want to make sure everything is as clear as possible for you, so you can plan your finances, time off and any support you may need.

### **1.2 Scope**

**1.2.1** This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees.

**1.2.2** This policy will be available in the People folders in the Fewer Better Rules Book

### **1.3 Responsibilities**

**1.3.1** The Head of People is accountable for ensuring that this policy is applied correctly.

**1.3.2** The People team are involved in delivering the policy.

**1.3.3** Line managers are responsible for liaising with the employee in relation to their period of leave, and where necessary arranging cover for the role.

**1.3.4** Employees who are applying for leave are responsible for following the process outlined in this policy.



## 1.4 Definitions

<b>Foster Carer</b>	Foster Carers provide children who are unable to live with their birth family a stable home on a temporary or longer-term basis either through a local authority or registered independent fostering provider.
<b>Kinship Carer</b>	Kinship care is when a child who cannot live with their birth parents is looked after by extended family members or friends. This must be a formally approved arrangement.

## Section 2: Policy and procedures

### 2.1 Foster Friendly Policy

2.1.1 We recognise and value the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care. We understand that foster carers who do other work in addition to fostering need some flexibility in their working arrangements in order to meet the needs of their fostered child.

### 2.2 Eligibility

2.2.1 In order to be eligible for foster leave and pay you must:

- have passed at least six months continuous service (and passed your probationary period)
- be applying to become a foster carer with a local authority or registered independent fostering provider
- be an approved foster carer and have a child in placement (or have had a child in placement for 75% of the previous 12 months) or are an approved kinship foster carer



## 2.2.2 What documentation you need to supply

You may need to supply the People team with the following documents:

- Confirmation of registration
- Confirmation of application details

## 2.3 When to tell your manager and the People team

2.3.1 We encourage you to share that you are planning to apply to be a Foster or Kinship with your manager as soon as possible, to ensure they can support you and are aware that you may require flexibility and time off.

## 2.4 Paid time off

2.4.1 We recognise that being a foster or kinship carer requires flexibility and a commitment to a number of appointments and trainings. To support you with this you are entitled to take up to five days paid leave in a rolling calendar year for Fostering and Kinship commitments. These might include (but are not limited to)

- assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer
- attendance at panel for approval
- long-term placement of a child/young person
- child review meeting
- annual foster carer review meeting and training

### 2.4.2 If you have exhausted this leave

If you need more time than the five days provided under this policy, you would need to take annual leave, unpaid leave or make use of the flexible working practices, see [Leave and Absence policy](#).

## 2.5 Taking leave

2.5.1 You should agree with your manager in advance of when you plan to take any leave for foster or kinship related activities. All leave should be logged on Cezanne under “Other Absence”, “Foster/Kinship Care”



## 2.6 Foster to adopt

2.6.1 If you are a local authority foster parent who has been approved as a prospective adopter, and a child is placed with you in a "foster to adopt" situation, you will be entitled to adoption leave and pay. See [Adoption and Surrogacy policy](#).

## 2.7 Support

2.7.1 We understand that being a foster or kinship carer, can be both rewarding and challenging. We will support you as best we can to provide flexibility, and we encourage you to speak with your line manager about any additional support you might need. You also have access to our [employee support service](#) with Care First.

## 2.8 Can I request to work flexibly?

2.8.1 All employees have the right to request flexible working patterns. Full details are provided in the [Leave and Absence policy](#).

## Section 3: Relevant references

### 3.1 Frontline policies and documents

3.1.1 Refer to other Frontline policies for further information on:

- Adoption and Surrogacy
- Leave and Absence