

Appendix C

Diversity Impact Assessment

| TITLE |
|---|
| Maternity and Paternity Policy |
| DATE |
| 10/03/2025 |
| LEAD OFFICER. |
| Nick Morgan, HR Business Partner |
| 1 Summary description of the proposed change |
| <p>The new policy incorporates the requirements of the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023.</p> <p>Incorporating the new legislation provided an opportunity to review the current content to improve support available to the councils employees.</p> <p>This policy aims to provide support for employees during and after pregnancy, including paid leave, flexible working arrangements, and return-to-work support.</p> <p>The overall policy contents have been reviewed in collaboration with the Public Health team. This has resulted in improved reference being introduced to assist across several relevant areas to support new mothers and parents.</p> <p>Neonatal leave entitlement has been added (section 7) where eligible parents will have a day one right to take up to 12 weeks of leave, fully paid, on top of any other leave they may be entitled to including maternity and paternity leave.</p> <p>The day one right does have a qualifying period of 26 weeks with the employer before there is an entitlement to pay. It is proposed that this is made a true one day right to leave and pay at Medway Council. Any financial impact of this is predicted to be very low and would not impact the maternity entitlement but this proposal would allow employees who have likely only just started employment to understand our values and commitment to supporting them.</p> <p>Miscarriage and Still Birth has been included in the policy. This has resulted to an amendment to parental bereavement leave policy which has been updated to include a new eligibility for miscarriage or still birth before 24 weeks. This has been put forward as a change to legislation in 2026 and expanding eligibility improves the support for our employees.</p> <p>Reference to be able to use compassionate leave (up to 10 days) has also been included for clarity on entitlement.</p> |

A further check and review of the policy has been made to make sure the policy aligns with 2024 legislation regarding reorganisation and redundancies.

To summarise, all areas of the policy have been reviewed with the aim to improve the policy for parents and help to support the aim of the council to be an employer of choice.

2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

E.g. Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user.

E.g. Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile

The policy was reviewed as collaborative effort between Public Health and HR. The policy was consulted with Staff Groups such as the Medway Makers alongside the Trade Unions.

Any feedback was fully considered and incorporated as appropriate.

The policy was benchmarked against best practice from other public sector employers and against ACAS, CIPD and GOV.UK.

3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

| Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010) | Adverse impact | Advance equality | Foster good relations |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Age | No | Yes | Yes |
| Disability | No | Yes | Yes |
| Gender reassignment | No | No | No |
| Marriage/civil partnership | No | Yes | Yes |
| Pregnancy/maternity | No | Yes | Yes |
| Race | No | No | No |
| Religion/belief | No | No | No |
| Sex | No | Yes | Yes |
| Sexual orientation | No | No | No |
| Care experience | No | No | No |

| Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010) | Adverse impact | Advance equality | Foster good relations |
|---|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Other (e.g. low income groups) | No | No | No |

4 Summary of the likely impacts

Who will be affected?

How will they be affected?

Who will be affected?

- Employees who are expecting or have recently had a child.

How will they be affected?

- Improved health and well-being due to better support during and after pregnancy.
- Increased job satisfaction and retention.
- Enhanced work-life balance.
- Further support for those parents whose child requires neonatal care
- An expansion of eligibility for parental bereavement leave for miscarriage and still birth before 24 weeks.

5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?

Are there alternative providers?

Can demand for services be managed differently?

Not applicable.

6 Action plan

Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

| Action | Lead | Deadline or review date |
|---|----------|-------------------------|
| Communicate Policy and Changes | HR/Comms | May/June 2025 |
| Training for managers on supporting new parents | HR | July 2025 |

7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be: to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate, consider alternatives, gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

Proceed with the implementation of the maternity and paternity policy, as it will significantly improve support for employees without any adverse impacts.

8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that the recommendation can be implemented, sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned, the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

Assistant Director

Samantha Beck-Farley

Date of authorisation