



## **Dependants Leave**

It is Pillar Kincardine policy to assist staff to strike a balance between work and family commitments, and to make them aware of their rights as employees. We recognise that employees are often faced with responsibilities for taking care of family members or dependants who are sick, disabled or elderly, and that it can be difficult sometimes to balance working life with these responsibilities.

### **Entitlement**

Pillar Kincardine employees have the right to take a reasonable period of unpaid leave to deal with an emergency involving a dependant, and not to be dismissed or victimised for doing so. This right allows employees to deal with a sudden or unexpected problem (other than a purely 'domestic' situation not involving a dependant) and make necessary longer term arrangements. There is no set limit to the number of times an employee can be absent from work under this right. It applies regardless of grade, length of service and hours worked.

To come within the definition of a 'dependant' the person must be one of the following:

- a spouse, civil partner, child or parent of the employee;
- someone who lives with the employee as part of their family eg an elderly aunt or grandparent or other (eg disabled) adult being cared for – but not a tenant lodger or employee;
- someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance in an emergency (for instance a grandparent living elsewhere, or an elderly neighbour living alone).

An 'emergency' is said to arise when an employee needs to respond to a sudden and immediate situation involving a dependant, eg when a dependant falls ill or is injured, or existing care arrangements are suddenly interrupted and no other arrangements can reasonably be made at the time. Dependants leave will not normally be granted to deal with predictable domestic circumstances

that could be accommodated using annual or flexi- leave (eg child care during school holidays).

It is recognised that the length of time off work will vary according to the circumstances and nature of the emergency; however for the majority of situations it is expected that a period of one or at most two days' leave will be reasonable. Should the employee require a longer period then other forms of leave should be considered.

There are no limits on how many times one can take time off for dependants but the Service Manager may talk to a member of staff if they think it is having an effect on their work.

### **Procedure**

There is no formal procedure; however, the employee should inform the Service Manager as soon as practicable of the reason for their absence and how long they expect to be away from work. They should provide regular updates throughout their absence, and record any leave taken on their Time Sheet. While Pillar Kincardine will endeavour to accommodate all reasonable requests, any abuse of the right to Dependants leave may result in disciplinary action.

### **Refusal of leave**

Staff who feel that they have been refused Dependants leave unreasonably or victimised for requesting such leave should in the first instance raise the matter with the Service Manager. They have the right to pursue the issue if necessary through the Grievance procedure.

**This policy complies with current legislation and will change if there are any changes to legislation before the next review of the policy**