

Consultation on Parental and Caring Rights

Closing Date: 29th November 2024

Douglas City Council Response

MATERNITY AND REDUNDANCY PROTECTIONS

Do you support an extended protection period from redundancy for a period following the maternity leave period?

Yes.

The extension of redundancy protections would be a significant step forward in supporting new parents in the workplace and would ensure that all employees feel valued and protected during important stages in their lives.

If the protection period from redundancy were to be extended for a period directly surrounding the maternity period, should this extension apply to those taking paternity leave?

No.

While the current legislation provides robust protections for maternity, adoption and shared parental leave, extending similar protections to those taking paternity leave would align with principles of equality and support modern family structures.

However, there are also significant considerations regarding practicality, fairness and the potential impact on the workplace dynamics that would necessitate careful consideration. Extending redundancy protection to paternity leave could create inconsistencies within family leave policies, it could lead to resentment among employees who may feel that those on paternity leave are receiving preferential treatment. There could be potential for affecting morale especially in situations where redundancies are unavoidable, and some employees may be overlooked in favour of those who are protected.

If the protection period from redundancy were to be extended, should this also apply to adopting parents?

Yes.

Applying the extended protected period to adopting parents would promote fairness as well as acknowledge the importance of supporting families formed through adoption. It would ensure that all parents, regardless of how they become parents, are provided with the necessary job security during this time.

NEONATAL CARE LEAVE

Do you support the introduction of an extended maternity period for those with children admitted to the neonatal care unit?

Yes.

Babies in neonatal care usually face significant health challenges and an extended leave period would allow the parents an opportunity to be present during this critical time especially when medical and treatment decision are being considered. An extended period would assist with alleviating parental stress during such a difficult period.

If a neonatal care period were to be introduced, would you anticipate any issues?

While the introduction of neonatal care leave would support families during difficult times careful consideration would need to be given to potential issues that may arise e.g., financial (paid/unpaid), perception of unfairness i.e., employees feeling their family situation is not being supported, etc. 'Neonatal care' would need to be defined.

How long would you suggest for additional leave and why?

Up to an additional 12-week period, depending on the circumstances and taking into consideration how early the baby is born from the due date. Babies in neonatal care often require ongoing medical appointments and treatments after they have been discharged. An additional leave period, if required, would allow parents the flexibility to attend these appointments without the added pressure of having to return during the early stages.

If this additional period of leave is NOT paid for by the employer, should provision be available for extended Government maternity allowance?

Yes.

Extending Government maternity allowance should be considered as this would support families by providing access to financial support during a difficult time, particularly those in lower paid jobs, when the employer does not offer enhanced maternity pay.

CARER'S LEAVE

Do you agree with the potential introduction of statutory provision for Carer's leave?

Yes.

Introducing a statutory provision for Carer's leave would provide essential support for employees balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. Supporting caregivers can lead to reduced absenteeism and turnover costs for employers.

Do you think Carer's leave should be a specific period of time of paid/unpaid leave each year?

Yes.

Establishing a specific period, paid or unpaid, would provide clarity. It would provide support and encourage the responsible use of leave while maintaining operational/service delivery.

Should provision be available for a more long-term Carer's leave?

Yes.

Extended leave would allow Carer's to take necessary breaks, reduce the risk of burnout and improving their overall mental health. However, this may be achievable via a 'Career Break' policy and not necessarily require an extension of a statutory provision under 'Carer's Leave'.

If Carer's leave is unpaid by the employer, should the Carer be able to access social security benefits during this time i.e. Carer's Allowance?

Yes.

Access to social security benefits like Carer's Allowance would provide essential support for caregivers. It would alleviate financial pressures and promote better caregiving practices and overall family well-being.

This consultation has asked questions regarding parental redundancy protection, neonatal care leave and Carer's leave. Do you have any other comments on any of these topics?

By considering the diverse needs of families and Carer's, a more inclusive and supportive structure that enhances well-being for all involved can be provided.