



## **Dudley Mind Policy for Time off for Dependant Care Leave**

### **1) Policy**

1.1 Time off for dependants is a right allowing employees to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with unexpected sudden emergencies regarding your dependants as defined below and to make any necessary longer term arrangements. An employee who uses this right is protected against dismissal or victimisation.

### **1.2 Definition of a dependant**

A dependant is:

- a husband, wife, child or parent of the employee.
- Someone who lives in the same household as the employee for example, a partner, elderly aunt or grandparent who lives in the household. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home, or someone who lives in the household as an employee, for example a live-in housekeeper.
- In cases of illness or injury, or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance. This may be where the employee is the primary carer or is the only person who can help in an emergency.

### **1.3 Circumstances under which an employee can take time off for a dependant**

The right enables employees to take action which is necessary to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem concerning a dependant and to make any necessary longer term arrangements.

- If a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted. The injury does not have to be life threatening and may be mental or physical.
- When a dependant is having a baby. An employee can take time off when necessary to assist a dependant when she is having a baby. This does not include time off after the birth to care for the child, an employee may be entitled to take paternity or parental leave for this purpose. Please also refer to Dudley Mind Parental leave and Paternity leave policy.
- To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured. Where a dependant needs to be cared for because of an illness or injury, the employee can take time off work to make longer term care arrangements. This might mean making arrangements to employ a temporary carer or taking a sick child to stay with relatives.

- To deal with the death of a dependant. An employee can take time off when a dependant dies to make funeral arrangements and to attend the funeral. Please also refer to Dudley Mind compassionate leave section of Special Leave policy.
- To deal with the unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant. Time off can be taken where the normal carer of the dependant is unexpectedly absent, for example a child minder or nurse may fail to turn up as arranged.
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child during school hours. For example, if the child has been involved in a serious incident such as a fight, is distressed, has been injured on a school trip or is being suspended from school.

## **2) Scope**

This policy applies to all Dudley Mind employees who have a contract of employment. All Dudley Mind employees are eligible to take time off for dependant care regardless of length of service.

## **3) Procedure**

### **Requesting Time off for Dependant Leave**

3.1 Dudley Mind recognises that it may not be possible for employees to make a request or give notice for time off for dependant leave. When advance notice is not possible employees must advise their Line Manager as soon as possible about their absence, the reason for it and how long they expect to be away from work. When an employee returns to work before it was possible for them to make contact with the Organisation, they must still provide reasons for the absence on their return to work.

3.2 All requests for time off for dependant leave should be authorised by the employee's line manager.

## **4) Entitlement**

4.1 The employee is entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off without pay in the circumstances set out above. For most cases 1 or 2 days should be sufficient to deal with the problem. For example, if a child falls ill with chickenpox, the leave should be enough to help the employee cope with the crisis – to deal with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor if necessary, and to make longer term care arrangements. An employee is not entitled to take two weeks' leave to look after a sick child.

4.2 The right is intended to cover genuine emergencies\*. No limit on the number of times an employee can be absent from work under this right has been set. If an employee needs longer time off than is reasonable to deal with the immediate emergency or knows in advance that they are going to need time off, they should ask for leave in the usual way. This may involve taking annual leave or, if the leave relates to a child, parental leave.

\*For non-emergency dependant care leave please refer to the special leave policy.

## **5) Conditions**

To qualify for leave the employee must tell Dudley Mind

- a) the reason for the absence as soon as reasonably practicable and
- b) how long the absence is expected to last (except in cases where the employee is not able to inform the employer until s/he has returned to work).

## **6. Returning to Work**

6.1 Employees returning to work following a period of time off for dependant care are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

6.2 Employees are protected from being penalised or dismissed because they have taken, or have sought to take, time off under this right.

## **7. Changes**

Dudley Mind reserves the right to change the provision of the Dependant Care Leave Policy and Procedure by amendment, addition or deletion or substitution of new procedures from time to time at its discretion. Employees will be consulted and notified of any changes by appropriate means.