



# FOSTERING FRIENDLY POLICY

COULD  
YOU...

**March 2020**    **Human Resources**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Royal Greenwich (RBG) is committed to being a ‘Fostering Friendly Employer’ through supporting our employees who are prospective or existing foster carers.

## **2. Background**

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- 2.1 There are currently over 65000 children in care in the UK and we recognise the need to do more to help recruit new foster carers. To address the national challenges around fostering, and to try and encourage more working people to become foster carers, the Government has called on employers to become “fostering friendly”. Royal Greenwich wishes to support those employees who are already foster carers and to encourage those who may be considering foster care to take that step as by doing so. As a result, more children in care can be matched with the best foster carer for them. We recognise that where employees have support, this may make the vital difference in the decision of an employee to become a foster carer.

## **3. Aim**

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- 3.1 Royal Greenwich offers staff the opportunity to work flexibly where this is compatible with the demands of their job. Our flexible working, child placement leave emergency time off for dependents and parental leave policies all apply to approved foster carers and kinship carers.  
This policy sets out the additional time off that we will offer prospective and existing foster carers.

## **4. Key Principles**

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- 4.1 Royal Greenwich recognises and values 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 to meet the needs of their fostered child.
- 4.2 Royal Greenwich is committed to support any staff member who is a foster carer or an approved carer. We will do this, wherever possible, by creating a fostering friendly organisation that offers flexible working arrangements which respond to the needs of all foster carers or approved kinship carer employees.
- 4.3 The process of seeking approval to become foster carers is a lengthy one and places a number of reasonable but demanding expectations upon prospective carers, particularly in relation to the training, assessment and approval process.
- 4.4 Wherever possible we will extend the terms of this policy to prospective foster or carers who have begun the formal process of seeking approval and registration as carers.

## **5. Eligibility**

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5.1 This policy applies to staff who:

- Are applying to become foster carers
- Are approved foster carers 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 carer
- and have three months or more employment service with the Council.

## **6. Entitlements**

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6.1 It is proposed that the following will apply:

- Employees will be eligible to up to 5 days paid additional leave for employees who are going through the application process to become a foster carer, as part of the fostering assessment process
- Up to 5 days paid additional leave each year for employees who are foster carers to attend training related to their position as foster carers and/or to attend meetings, panels, hearings or any other key events or activities in support of foster children and young people in their care.
- Royal Greenwich adopts a flexible and accommodating approach to requests for time off, leave and flexible working arrangements from foster carers and prospective foster carers in relation to their care of a looked after child or during their journey through the process to become foster carers.
- Further support to cover any extra training which may be needed or to cover unforeseen emergencies related to their fostering role remains at their line manager's discretion.
- As a 'Fostering Friendly Employer' Royal Greenwich will commit to supporting the annual fostering awareness campaigns and Foster Care Fortnight.

## **7. Time off**

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7.1 Royal Greenwich values and will support foster carers and approved carers by giving paid time off in any 12-month period as follows:

- Assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer - up to three days
- Attendance at panel for approval – one day
- Long-term placement of a child/young person – to be determined based on the needs of the child.
- Child review meetings, annual foster carer review meeting and training – up to five days.
- The employee's line manager will approve the leave on a discretionary basis taking into account individual circumstances of each case and operational requirements of the service.
- The leave will be considered and approved on a pro rata basis.

## **8. Procedure for requesting time off**

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- 8.1 The request for leave should outline the reason and the amount of leave required.

Where more than the maximum entitlement of fostering friendly paid leave is requested (as outlined above), the line manager and the staff member should discuss other means available e.g. annual leave, time off in lieu.

Employees should send the request for leave for authorisation by the line manager. The line manager should forward the request to HR Professional Services and log the information onto ITrent.

## **9. Commitment to Equality**

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- 9.1 This policy allows Royal Greenwich to manage requests for time off consistently. It embeds an open and accommodating approach to any requests from foster carers for flexible working arrangements in relation to their responsibilities as a foster carer.

- 9.2 Royal Greenwich will ensure this policy is applied fairly to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of its employees.

## **10. Related policies**

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- 10.1 Special Leave, Adoption, Annual Leave and Flexi-Time

## **Version Control**

<b>Date of last Review</b>	<b>Date current version</b>	<b>Proposed Review Date</b>