

Denbighshire's Foster Friendly Policy

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Version control

This document is subject to regular review due to legislative and policy changes. The latest versions of all our publications can be found on our website. Before contacting us about the content of this document, we recommend that you refer to the most recent version on the website and any relevant guidance.

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Notes / changes
v1.0			Original issue
v1.1	21/03/2025	David Kennedy	Reformatting

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Introduction

Working for Denbighshire and Fostering for Denbighshire

Denbighshire County Council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children cared for. Denbighshire understand that foster carers who are employees of the Council need some flexibility in their working arrangement in order to meet the needs of the children in their care.

Denbighshire County Council is committed to support any staff member who is, or who is in the process of assessment to become, a foster carer or an approved connected person's foster carer for Foster Wales Denbighshire or any of the other Foster Wales local authorities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide motivation and reducing the barriers to become a Foster Carer for Foster Wales Denbighshire.

To recognise the additional commitments and demands of caring for children looked after by providing additional special leave that will be offered to prospective and existing foster carers and connected persons foster carers of Foster Wales Denbighshire.

Equalities

The Equalities Policy must be applied to ensure there is no discrimination based on: Race and Ethnicity; Disability; Age; Gender; Sexual Orientation; Religion and Belief; Welsh Language or Human Rights; Pregnancy and Maternity; Gender Re- assignment and Marriage and Civil Partnership.

Eligibility

This Policy applies to all staff employed by the Council, with the exception of those in educational establishments with delegated powers. Employees will be afforded equal opportunities in employment.

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This policy applies to contracted Denbighshire County Council employees who:

- Are applying to become foster carers for Foster Wales Denbighshire or any other Foster Wales local authority. It does not apply to those being assessed by external commercial, charitable or private agencies.
- Are approved Foster Wales Denbighshire foster carer or approved by any Foster Wales local authority.
- 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.
- Have 6 months or more employment with Denbighshire County Council
- Part-time employees will have pro-rata entitlement.
- It does not apply to Agency Workers, Casual Workers, or Consultants.

Scope of Provision

Denbighshire County Council is committed to support any staff member who is a Foster Wales foster carer or an approved connected person's foster carer. Denbighshire will do this, wherever possible, by creating a fostering friendly organisation that offers flexible working arrangements which respond to the needs of all the foster carers where this is compatible with the demands of their job.

Denbighshire's flexible working policy, Family Friendly and Special Leave as well as parental leave policies all apply to foster carers.

Denbighshire County Council values and will support Foster Wales Foster Carers by providing an additional 5 special leave in a 12 month period as follows:

- Assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer.
- Attendance at panel for approval.
- Child review meetings, annual Foster Carer review meeting and training.

Written evidence must be provided to the Manager to demonstrate they are approved Foster Carers with Denbighshire County Council (or other Foster Wales local authority) or

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are actively being assessed to be Foster Carers with Denbighshire County Council (or other Foster Wales local authority).

Leave can be taken as full or half days.

Procedure for requesting time off

The Time off work policy should be used for the purposes of requesting and recording paid time off. The request for paid leave should outline the reason and the amount of leave required.

The employee's line manager will approve the leave on a discretionary basis in advance of the time off considering individual circumstances of each case and operational requirements of the business. The leave will be considered and approved on a pro rata basis.

Where more than the maximum entitlement of fostering friendly paid leave is needed alternative options should be discussed such as annual leave, banked leave, flexi, or additional unpaid leave and requested as per the appropriate policies.

Written evidence must be provided to the employee's manager by the Team Manager for Foster Wales Denbighshire to demonstrate they are approved Foster Carers with Denbighshire County Council (or another Foster Wales local authority) or are actively being assessed to be Foster Carers with Denbighshire County Council (or another Foster Wales local authority).

Leave can be taken as full or half days.

Records and Monitoring

A record of special leave requested and approved should be kept / uploaded on the employee's personal record.

If special leave has been turned down a note should be made of the reason(s) and recorded/uploaded on the employee's personal record.

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Any time taken should be recorded appropriately on the Vision Time or timesheet system as paid Fostering Leave.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years with the guidance and support of Education and Children's Services. Minor amendments will be delegated to the Head of Corporate Support Services - People, e.g. terminology issues, title descriptions, legal changes that have to be implemented.

Changes to the policy will not be introduced without prior consideration with trade unions recognised by the Council.

Disagreements / Appeals

Under normal circumstances, any appeals arising from the application of the Policy will be for resolution through the Grievance Procedure.

Additional resources and information

Time off work policy

Denbighshire Fostering Information

The Fostering Network