

**COUNCIL
8 OCTOBER 2026**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

To be moved by Councillor Dominic Griffiths and seconded by Councillor David Chalmers.

Paternity Leave

This council, like many public sector organisations, faces ongoing challenges with staff recruitment and retention. These challenges can directly affect service delivery and organisational resilience.

The UK offers some of the weakest statutory paternity and second parent adoption leave in Europe: just two weeks at a flat statutory rate of £194.32 per week from 6 April 2026. This is equivalent to around 40% of the national minimum wage. For many households, this level of pay is not financially viable.

According to a 2023 TUC poll, over half (53 per cent) of families struggle financially when fathers and second parents take paternity leave. One in five fathers and second parents (21 per cent) are forced to return to work early because they cannot afford to stay off. Around 1 in 3 fathers take no paternity or adoption leave at all.

Children with more involved fathers have improved outcomes across education, cognitive development, and emotional wellbeing. They are less likely to experience emotional or behavioural problems as teenagers and adults, and are better able to regulate stress. Paternity leave plays a crucial role in establishing this early involvement.

Better paternity leave also benefits mothers. New mothers are currently left without support while recovering from birth, including the 40 per cent of births that end in caesarean section. Research shows that enabling both parents to take leave together reduces maternal postnatal depression by 26 per cent.

Inadequate paternity leave is also damaging to men's mental health. Research by The Dad Shift and Movember found that 45 per cent of UK fathers experience multiple symptoms of depression or anxiety in their baby's first year. Eighty-two per cent of fathers said that improving paternity leave is the single biggest action the government could take to support new dads' mental health. Poor mental health is a leading driver of absenteeism at work: better paternity leave could reduce this pressure on fathers employed by this council.

A review from the Leeds University Business School found a strong corporate consensus that generous, enhanced parental leave acts as a vehicle for talent management. Employers who invest in these policies reap measurable rewards in long-term staff loyalty and retention rates improve.

This Council believes that offering enhanced paternity and adoption leave for second parents will strengthen this council's reputation as a modern, family-friendly employer and help address longstanding workforce retention issues.

As one of the largest employers in the area, this Council has an opportunity to lead by example and promote better working standards for second parents.

Therefore, Council resolves:

- 1. To request that the Cabinet explore, with the aim of introducing enhanced paternity leave and adoption leave for second parents for council employees, offering a minimum of six weeks paid paternity or adoption leave at a minimum 90% of their salary for all eligible fathers and second parents.**
- 2. That the leader of the Council writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Business and Trade urging the Government to introduce a minimum of six weeks' paid (at a minimum of 90% of their salary) paternity leave nationally.**