



Subject:	Paternity Pay Provisions
Date:	24 October 2025
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Eamonn Neeson, Principal HR Advisor (Employee Relations)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At the SP&R committee on 20 June 2025, the Committee requested that a further report on the NJC terms and conditions (for maternity pay) and a benchmarking report on Paternity Pay provisions be submitted to a future meeting.

1.2	This report informs Committee of the Council's paternity pay provisions and comparisons with a selection of both private and public organisations as outlined at Appendix 1.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>NJC Maternity Scheme</p> <p>At SP&R committee on 20 June 2025 a report was presented detailing Belfast City Council's maternity leave and pay scheme.</p> <p>The report noted that the Council applies the maternity scheme as set out in Part 2 of the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Local Government Authorities (Green Book). Part 2 of the Green Book consists of the Key National Provisions applicable for all local authorities to all employees covered by NJC and are basic provisions which constitute a standard throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Part 3 of the Green Book meanwhile provides other national provisions which may be modified by local agreement.</p> <p>On seeking advice from the Northern Ireland Local Government Authority (NILGA), it was confirmed that the provisions provided in Part 2 of the Green Book should only be modified by national agreements. This would include the NJC pay spine, entitlement to sick pay, minimum leave entitlements, the standard working week, the maternity scheme (as reported) among other provisions. However, it should be noted that most local councils have reached local agreements to have a more generous minimum annual leave entitlement than the 23 days, as set out in Part 2 of the Green Book. NILGA aren't aware of any local authorities that have moved away from the GB maternity scheme.</p>
3.2	<p>Paternity Leave and Pay</p> <p>Unlike its Maternity Scheme, the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Green Book) does not provide for a contractual Paternity Leave Scheme. It does, however, provide an entitlement to Maternity Support leave as below:</p> <p><i>Maternity support leave of 5 days with pay shall be granted to the child's father or the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.</i></p> <p>Those organisations governed by Green Book terms and conditions will be contractually obliged to provide this to its employees and it has been found through the benchmarking that most will offset this against the statutory paternity leave entitlements and include this within the paternity leave entitlement.</p>

3.3	<p>Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay</p> <p>Paternity Leave and pay is a statutory entitlement which will apply to employees if they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are biological fathers • the husband or partner of the mother who have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing (this includes same sex partners) • the child's adopter • the intended parent (if having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement) • has, or expects to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing <p>Employees are entitled to two weeks leave paid at the rate of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) provided that they have at least 26 weeks continuous service with the employer ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) - the qualifying week.</p> <p>The rate of SSP is set each year by government and is currently £187.18 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is the lower).</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council Paternity Leave and Pay Provisions</p> <p>Belfast City Council's Paternity Leave scheme provides for the statutory two weeks' leave, however the payments are enhanced above the rate of SSP as per below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1: Full Pay • Week 2: SPP or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is the lower). <p>This will apply to those employees who meet the criteria as set out above in the statutory requirements, ie they must have 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of confinement (EWC)</p> <p>As referred to at 3.2 above the maternity support leave of five days on full pay is included in the paternity leave entitlement.</p>
3.5	<p>Comparisons with Other Organisations</p> <p>Benchmarking was undertaken against a number of other organisations' paternity leave and pay provisions to include public and private sector. A summary of these is included in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Many of the organisations benchmarked offer paternity leave and pay provisions which enhance the statutory entitlements. All other local council's that provided their paternity pay scheme offer the same amount of paternity leave pay entitlements as the Council and most</p>

	<p>of these provided the same enhanced rates of paternity pay. None of these provided greater enhancements than the Council.</p> <p>Of the other local government organisations the Education Authority, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and Translink provide the same entitlements as the Council.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Civil Service provides two weeks paternity leave on full pay provided the employee meets the statutory qualifying criteria.</p> <p>The benchmarking showed that Queen's University Belfast offer enhanced leave and pay, providing employees with up to three weeks leave on full pay, while the Ulster University offer the same entitlement as Council (however it will only apply to employees who have a full year continuous service at the qualifying week, otherwise the statutory provisions apply).</p> <p>A number of private sector organisations were included as part of the benchmarking exercise. These were a selection of organisations that published their paternity leave and pay schemes. It was found that many provide enhanced paternity leave and pay provisions, over and above the statutory entitlement. There are also variations to the criteria required to be entitled to the leave and pay among the organisations benchmarked (see appendix 1).</p> <p>The benchmarking indicates that most private sector organisations provide an enhanced rate of paternity leave and pay above the statutory requirement, while local government organisations generally provide for the statutory two weeks leave with an enhancement to full pay for the first week. This generally incorporates the Maternity Support Leave provisions as set out in Part 2 of the Green Book.</p>
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no additional finance or resource implications relating to this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no equality or good relations implications relating to this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Paternity Pay Provisions Benchmarking Outcomes