



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Simon Hoare MP
Minister for Local Government
2 Marsham Street
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Our reference: MC2024/09129

Cllr Nesil Caliskan
Leader of the LGA Labour Group
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24th April 2024

Thank you for your letter of 9 April in response to my letter of 21 March, in which you helpfully note several questions that local authorities may have when seeking to accommodate members in need of maternity, paternity, or neonatal leave.

Whilst it is for individual local authorities to determine whether or not to adopt a parental leave policy, it is encouraging that many councils are reportedly already thinking about how they can support members who require flexibility in relation to their parental responsibilities.

In your letter you raised a query about whether members would be able to continue to receive Special Responsibility Allowances whilst on parental leave, and whether those covering their position are entitled to these allowances. Councils are required by Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel - it is for such panels to make recommendations to the authority about the level of these allowances and to whom they should be paid.

I also note your concerns that councillors may feel compelled to share personal information in circumstances where local custom and practice is that members are required to notify full council of a leave of absence. Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives authorities the discretion to allow longer periods of absence as needed. The legislation only specifies a requirement for the absence to be "due to some reason approved by the authority", and does not stipulate that councillors need to attend a meeting of full council to make their case to obtain such approval. It is for individual councils to determine their own decision-making processes.

As noted in my original letter to council leaders, the Government encourages councils to look sympathetically at accommodating such requests, and to show understanding and flexibility to councillors who need to care for their children.

Thank you for writing on this important matter. I hope the above is helpful.

SIMON HOARE MP
Minister for Local Government

Handwritten note: "LGA L. needs for care" and "LGA fund." with a signature.