



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann
Central Bank of Ireland

Eurosystem

Carer's Leave Policy

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Introduction

In some circumstances, an employee may be required to take unpaid periods of leave to fulfil their role as a carer. It is important that colleagues understand their entitlements and the supports that are available to them.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the carer's leave entitlements that are available to colleagues.

Scope

This policy applies to all Bank employees.

Policy Statement

Carer's Leave

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows a colleague to leave their employment temporarily to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention.

The Central Bank applies the provisions contained in the Act and the main elements are set out in this policy.

Carer's Leave Entitlements

- A total of up to 104 weeks (unpaid) carer's leave may be taken:
 - As one continuous block of leave;
 - The leave can be broken into shorter periods adding-up to 104 weeks, however, 6 weeks must elapse between one period of leave terminating and the next period commencing; and
 - The Central Bank is entitled to refuse a request for a period of carer's leave of less than 13 weeks, setting out the reason for the refusal in writing.

Criteria to Avail of Carer's Leave

- All colleagues with one year's continuous service are eligible to apply for carer's leave:
 - The person they are proposing to care for must be deemed to be in need of full-time care and attention by a Deciding Officer of the Department of Social Protection (DSP) i.e. deemed a 'relevant person';
 - Carer's leave will not be granted to an employee if the care recipient is already in receipt of full-time attention from another person;
 - Carer's leave must only be taken for the purpose of providing full-time care and attention to the relevant person for the duration of the leave.
- Colleagues will only be entitled to take carer's leave in respect of one person at a time:
 - If carer's leave for one relevant person has terminated, colleagues cannot commence another period of carer's leave to care for a different person until a period of six months has lapsed since the termination of the previous period of carer's leave;

- An exception may arise where two relevant persons reside together and are both are in need of full-time care and attention. In this situation, the total amount of carer's leave is 208 weeks (104 weeks for each person being cared for). This entitlement applies on one occasion only per employee.
- A colleague will not be entitled to remuneration or superannuation entitlements during a period of carer's leave:
 - The first 13 weeks of carer's leave will qualify for public holiday entitlements and will be treated as qualifying service for annual leave purposes;
 - The employment rights of colleagues availing of carer's leave will be unaffected during the leave ;
 - Absence from employment while on carer's leave shall not be treated as part of any other leave to which you are entitled (e.g. sick leave, annual leave, adoptive leave, maternity leave, parental leave or force majeure leave);
 - Colleagues may engage in employment outside the home whilst on carer's leave for up to 18.5 hours per week, provided your income from employment is less than a weekly income limit set by the DSP. Alternatively, you may attend an educational or training course or take up voluntary or community work for up to 18.5 hours per week. You can also engage in limited self-employment in your home; again this is subject to an upper income limit set out by the DSP. If you do engage in employment or attend a course, please ensure that you notify HR Support providing relevant details; and
 - Colleagues must notify the Central Bank of any change in circumstances that affects your entitlement to carer's leave as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Applying for Carer's Leave

- In order to apply for carer's leave, colleagues must first apply to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) using the 'Carer's Benefit Form' available on www.welfare.ie.

Termination of Carer's Leave

Other than the normal expiry of the period of carer's leave (as set out in the signed confirmation document), carer's leave may be terminated in the following circumstances:

- If the care recipient no longer satisfies the conditions to be classified as a 'relevant person';
- If the employee no longer satisfies the conditions for the provision of full-time care and attention;
- If the Central Bank advises the employee that they are required to return to work on a specific date following a decision of a Deciding Officer or an Appeals Officer (from the DSP) that the leave should end; and
- In the event of the death of the care recipient, the leave will terminate, either 6 weeks after the death, or on the original end date (as set out in the confirmation document), whichever is earlier.
- If the Central Bank becomes aware that carer's leave is being abused, obliged to notify the DSP, providing grounds for their concern.

Alternative Employment and Carer's Benefit

It will be a matter for colleagues to make an application to DSP to determine if they are eligible for carer's benefit.

During the unpaid carer's leave, colleagues may engage in alternative employment, self-employment or participate in training or education courses as approved by DSP for a maximum of 15 hours per week. Colleagues should consult with the DSP so as to be informed of any income thresholds that may apply if they are also in receipt of Carer's benefit.

PRSI Record

Colleagues who are in receipt of carer's benefit will get credited social insurance contributions. If they are not in receipt of carer's benefit, they are still entitled to get credits and can request HR Support to complete the application form for carer's leave credits (available on www.welfare.ie) for submission to the DSP.

Returning to Work

Colleagues are required to provide at least 4 weeks' notice, in writing, to HR Support confirming their intention to return to work. They are also encouraged to keep line management informed regarding their intended return to work date.



T: +353 (0)1 224 5800
E: publications@centralbank.ie
www.centralbank.ie



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