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Time off for employees in respect of emergency situations related to dependants

All employees, regardless of length of service, have the right to take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant, and not to be dismissed or victimised for doing so.

The right **does not** include a statutory right to pay, although many employers consider it good practice to include a clause in the contract allowing reasonable time off with pay.

A dependant is defined as the partner, child or parent of the employee, or someone who lives with the employee as part of their family, which could include a relative or friend living as part of the household. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the home.

In cases of illness or injury, or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance. This may be where the employee is the primary carer or the only person who can help in an emergency.

There is no set limit to the amount of time off that can be taken, it is a question of what is reasonable. In most cases, the amount of leave will be one or two days. (The employer may allow employees to take a longer period of leave, or to take paid leave, under other arrangements).

Employees should tell their employers as soon as possible about their absence, the reason for it and how long they expect to be away from work.

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