



Submission to the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Sub-Panel

Family-Friendly Employment Law Amendments

Dated: 29th August 2025

Virtual HR welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review of the family-friendly amendments to Jersey's Employment Law. Our feedback is informed by discussions and surveys with our clients across industries including construction and trades, hospitality and tourism, digital services, finance and professional services, technology, and transport. Businesses consulted ranged from small (fewer than 10 employees), to medium (10–49 employees), to large (50+ employees), with the majority being small and medium-sized enterprises.

Benefits

- **Support for employees:** Employers recognise that the changes have provided important support for employees at key stages of family life. Rights to leave and to attend antenatal/adoption appointments are seen as reasonable and workable in practice.
- **Positive employee relations:** Several employers reported that the changes have been well-received by employees and help promote loyalty and goodwill.

Challenges

- **Operational cover:** Where businesses have had to accommodate extended leave or flexible working in customer-facing or operational roles, impacts were described as “somewhat negative”, particularly in smaller organisations with fewer resources to redistribute workload.
- **Flexible working:** Employers are supportive in principle, but note that productivity and service delivery can be affected where roles are not easily adaptable. Views vary significantly between sectors.

Unintended Consequences

- **Increased expectations:** Some employers observed a shift towards a greater sense of entitlement among employees, which can create pressure in managing requests fairly across teams.
- **Productivity pressures:** A few employers expressed concern that further extensions to rights without supporting measures could place additional cost pressures on businesses already facing productivity challenges.

Suggested Improvements

- **Tailored support:** If further entitlements are considered, employers recommend that financial support for smaller businesses, or differentiated requirements by business size, should be explored.
- **Inclusive language:** We have received feedback highlighting that the current legislation and associated policies continue to use gendered terms such as “mothers”, “fathers”, “he” and “she”. This excludes individuals who do not identify with these terms and does not reflect the diversity of gender identities and family structures in Jersey today. We recommend a full review of legislative and policy language to ensure it is gender-neutral and inclusive, providing clarity and fairness for all.
- **Consistency with UK practice:** A small number of employers suggested exploring greater alignment with UK allowances (particularly paid leave), though this was not a majority view.

Conclusion

Overall, the family-friendly amendments are widely seen as adequate and workable, delivering benefits to employees without imposing unmanageable burdens on employers. The key message from our clients is that the current framework strikes a fair balance, and while there may be scope to improve inclusivity of language and consider alignment with broader practice, additional entitlements should not be introduced without careful consideration of their impact on small and medium-sized employers and the Island’s wider productivity challenges.

Yours sincerely,

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