

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

MATERNITY LEAVE

Notification of pregnancy

If you are pregnant please do speak to us as early as possible so that we can discuss with you any particular health and safety risks which may affect you or the baby. We will conduct a formal risk assessment and identify measures that we can take to minimise the risks to your own health and that of your unborn baby.

By the end of the 15th week before the baby is due you must tell us when you wish to start your Maternity Leave. This can be any time from 11 weeks before the baby is due. We will then write to you within the next 28 days to confirm all the details and state the date we will be expecting you to return to work. You can change your mind about the start date but you must give us 28 days' notice of the change.

Irrespective of service, all pregnant employees are entitled to a total of 52 weeks Maternity Leave. The first 26 weeks is called Ordinary Maternity Leave. The second 26 weeks is called Additional Maternity Leave. You are entitled to all your non-pay related contractual benefits throughout the whole of your Maternity Leave period.

If you are not planning to take all your Maternity Leave you must let us know when you will return. You can change your mind but must give us 8 weeks' notice of a change.

The first two weeks after the birth must be taken as Compulsory Maternity Leave.

If you decide not to return to work you are required to give your contractual notice if you are resigning but giving longer is helpful. You are still entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance even if you are not returning to work.

Ante Natal Care

All pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to receive ante-natal care provided such care is on the advice of a doctor, midwife or health visitor. Where such appointments can be arranged to take place outside of working hours you should do so. Copies of all appointment times should be provided.

We need you to provide us with your MAT B1 maternity certificate showing your expected week of childbirth which your doctor or midwife will give you when you are about 25 weeks pregnant. An expectant father, or the partner of a pregnant woman, is entitled to take unpaid time off work to attend up to 2 antenatal appointments, lasting up to 6.5 hours each, with their partner.

Pay and Benefits during Maternity Leave

To receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) you must have been employed by us continuously for at least 26 weeks up to and into the 15th week before the week your baby is due.

SMP is also subject to having average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) for National Insurance purposes.

The earliest date that SMP can start is from the 11th week before the week your baby is due and the latest from the day following the birth. If you continue to work after the 11th week before the week your baby is due SMP will start from any day you choose, once you have stopped work to have your baby. This means that your SMP should start from the first day of your maternity leave.

The start of your SMP will change if:

- your baby is born before the start of the 11th week or before the start of your SMP pay period. If this happens SMP will start from the day following the birth of your baby
- you are off sick from work with a pregnancy-related illness within the 4 weeks before your baby is due. SMP will start from the day following the first complete day you are off sick from work for that reason.

If you are entitled to SMP and you leave your employment with us:

- after the start of the 15th week before your baby is due but before the start of the 11th week - your SMP will start from the beginning of the 11th week before the week your baby is due.
- at any time after the start of the 11th week before the week your baby is due and before the start of your maternity pay period - your SMP will start from the day after you left employment.

SMP is paid for a continuous period of up to 39 weeks, at two rates:

First 6 weeks	90% of your average weekly earnings with no upper limit
Remaining 33 weeks	Standard rate or a rate equal to 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

Maternity Allowance

If you are not eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay you may be entitled to Maternity Allowance if

- you have worked (including self-employment) for 26 weeks during the 66 weeks before your baby is due (your 'test period')
- you earned £30 a week averaged over any 13 weeks in your test period
- you paid Class 2 (self-employed) National Insurance contributions or held a certificate of small earnings exception.

To claim Maternity Allowance, you should ask your local Jobcentre Plus for form MA1.

Keeping in Touch Days

Whilst you are on Maternity Leave we will try to keep you up to date with all that is happening at work. This may be to let you know about any changes, invite you to attend a particular event or to offer a training opportunity. You do not have to attend. You can work up to 10 'Keep in Touch' days during your leave without this affecting your Statutory Maternity Pay.

Returning to work

If you plan to return to work before the end of your Additional Maternity Leave you must give us at least 8 weeks' notice of the date on which you intend to return.

If you come back to work after the Ordinary Maternity Leave period you may return to the same job with the same terms and conditions as you had before your leave. If you return after the Additional Maternity Leave period you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions but if this is not reasonably practicable, to a position which is at the same level and with terms and conditions no less favourable than your previous role.

If you are planning to breast feed when you return to work please let us know so that we can carry out a risk assessment and provide suitable rest facilities for you.

ADOPTION LEAVE

To qualify for Statutory Adoption Leave, you must be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency. There is no longer a requirement to have 26 weeks' continuous service.

You are entitled to a total of 52 weeks Statutory Adoption Leave. The first 26 weeks is called Ordinary Adoption Leave. The second 26 weeks is called Additional Adoption Leave. You are entitled to all your non pay related contractual benefits throughout the whole of your Adoption Leave period.

Adoptive Parents must give 7 days' notice of having been matched with a child or as soon as is practicable. You should provide a 'matching certificate' from the adoption agency. Adoption Leave can start from the date of the child's placement or from a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement (or 28 days in the case of overseas adoption). Either one of the parents may choose to take Adoption Leave.

You are permitted to bring forward your adoption leave start date, provided that you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. You may also postpone your adoption leave start date, provided that you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the original proposed start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Within 28 days of receiving your notice of intention to take adoption leave, we will write to you confirming the latest date on which you must return to work after adoption leave.

Time off to attend adoption appointments

Employees who are adopting a child are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments.

An employee adopting a child alone is entitled to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. Where an employee is part of a couple jointly adopting a child, the couple can elect for one of them to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other can elect to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

The purpose of the appointment is to enable the employee (and his/her partner) to have contact with the child (for example, to bond with her before the placement) and for any other purpose connected with the adoption (for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the care of the child).

The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with the employee.

We may ask you for proof of the date and time of the appointment and that the appointment has been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency (for example, a letter or email from the adoption agency).

In addition, if you are adopting jointly, we may ask you to sign a declaration, to be submitted alongside the documentary evidence, confirming that you have elected to exercise your right under the Employment Rights Act 1996 to take time off to attend an adoption appointment. We would ask for the declaration on the first occasion on which you ask for time off to attend an adoption appointment.

Returning to work

If you plan to return to work before the end of your Additional Adoption Leave you must give us 8 weeks' notice of the date on which you intend to return. You can change your mind but must give us 8 weeks' notice of a change.

If you come back to work after the Ordinary Adoption Leave period you may return to the same job with the same terms and conditions as you had before your leave. If you return after the Additional Adoption Leave period you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions but if this is not reasonably practicable, to a position which is at the same level and with terms and conditions no less favourable than your previous role.

If you decide not to return to work you are required to give your contractual notice if you are resigning but giving longer is helpful. You are still entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay even if you are not returning to work.

Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

To receive Statutory Adoption Pay you must have been employed by us continuously for at least 26 weeks by the week you were matched with a child.

SAP is also subject to having average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) for National Insurance purposes.

SAP is paid for a continuous period of up to 39 weeks, at two rates:

First 6 weeks	90% of your average weekly earnings with no upper limit
Remaining 33 weeks	Standard rate or a rate equal to 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

Paid Adoption Leave is available for a child adopted under UK law. Some details may vary for parents adopting outside the UK.

Keeping in Touch Days

Whilst you are on Adoption Leave we will try to keep you up to date with all that is happening at work. This may be to let you know about any changes, invite you to attend a particular event or to offer a training opportunity. You do not have to attend.

You can work up to 10 'keep in touch' days during your leave without this affecting your Statutory Adoption Pay.

ORDINARY PARENTAL LEAVE

Unpaid parental leave may be taken to care for a child or arrange the care of the child.

To be eligible, you must:

- have been employed by us for a minimum of one year
- have or expect to have parental responsibility for a child or children under the age of 18
- have become the adoptive parents of a child under the age of 18
- comply with the notification requirements and supply documentary evidence as requested

A maximum of 18 weeks per child may be taken in total.

If you wish to take parental leave you must apply at least 21 days before the date on which you wish your leave to begin. Leave should normally be taken in one week blocks to a maximum of 4 weeks at any one time; requests for longer periods will be dealt with on an individual basis. The maximum permitted leave in any one year is 4 weeks per child, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will respond as soon as possible and if we wish to postpone the parental leave must do so within 7 days of receiving the request. We will respond sympathetically to all requests but may ask you to postpone the leave for business reasons, for a maximum of 6 months. Any leave at the time of childbirth or adoption cannot be postponed.

Where the child is disabled and eligible for Disability Living Allowance, parental leave may be taken in shorter periods.

We will keep a record of parental leave taken and may be asked by a future employer for details of how much parental leave has been taken. Entitlement to parental leave is limited to 18 weeks irrespective of whether you change employer.

You have the right to return to the same job if the period of leave is four weeks or less. If the period of leave follows on from other statutory leave and the total amount of leave amounts to more than 26 weeks, the right to return is to the same job, or if that is not reasonably practicable, to a similar job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than those applied in the old job.

PATERNITY POLICY

About this Policy

This policy outlines when an employee may be entitled to paternity leave and paternity pay and sets out the arrangements for taking it.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Entitlement to Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is available on the birth of a child if you have been continuously employed by us for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and either:

- you are the biological father and will have some responsibility for the child's upbringing; or
- you are the spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner of the biological mother and will have the main responsibility (with the mother) for the child's upbringing.

In relation to surrogacy, you must be a parental order parent, and must have, or expect to have, the main responsibility (other than that of Parent A) for the child's upbringing.

In the event of a stillbirth (after 24 weeks of pregnancy) or death of a child, you will be treated as having satisfied the above criteria if you would have had the requisite responsibility for the child's upbringing had the child not been stillborn or died.

Paternity leave is available where a child is placed with you for adoption by an adoption agency, if you have been continuously employed by us for at least 26 weeks ending with the week in 0 which the agency notifies you that you have been matched with a child. In such cases you may be entitled to take adoption leave instead. However, adoption leave may only be taken by one adoptive parent. Paternity leave is available to the other adoptive parent (of either sex).

Taking Paternity Leave

You may take your paternity leave entitlement as either: a single block of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks; or as two separate blocks of one whole week. You can start your leave on the date of birth or placement, or later, provided it is taken within 52 weeks of the birth or placement. (If the baby is premature the period ends eight weeks after the start of the Expected Week of Childbirth.)

To take paternity leave you must give us at least 28 day's written notice (or no more than seven days after the adoption agency notified you of being matched with a child), or as soon as you reasonably can, stating:

- the Expected Week of Childbirth;
- how you wish to take your leave; and

- when you would like your leave to start.

You can change the intended start date by giving us 28 days' notice or, if this is not possible, as much notice as you can.

Paternalty Pay

Statutory paternalty pay (SPP) is payable during paternalty leave provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the Qualifying Week (the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth or the week in which the adoption agency notified you of a match) and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. The rate of SPP is set by the government each tax year.

During Paternalty Leave

All the usual terms and conditions of your employment remain in force during paternalty leave, except for the terms relating to pay.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during paternalty leave. If your paternalty leave continues into the next holiday year, any remaining holiday that is not taken before your paternalty leave can be carried over to the next holiday year.

If you are a member of our pension scheme, we will, subject to you making employee contributions, make employer pension contributions during paternalty leave, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any paternalty pay you are receiving.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE (SPL)

What is SPL?

SPL is a legal entitlement for eligible parents of babies due, or children placed for adoption. It provides both parents with the opportunity to choose how to share the care of their child during the child's first year.

Our policy on shared parental leave and pay reflects the legislation.

The timescales and process for taking SPL are very complex. This policy does not attempt to cover all potential scenarios. Please speak to your line Manager if you have any queries or wish to discuss possible arrangements. Template letters can be provided if required to assist the process of applying for SPL.

Good communication during the planning for SPL is the key to finding a workable plan for both employee and the Company.

Key points

The amount of SPL available is calculated using the mother's entitlement to maternity/adoption leave, which allows them to take up to 52 weeks' leave. If they reduce their maternity/adoption entitlement then they and/or their partner may opt-in to the SPL system and take any remaining weeks as SPL.

The right to take 52 weeks Maternity or Adoption Leave remains and it is only if parents wish to share the traditional leave that this policy applies. Note also that the separate right to Ordinary Parental Leave (unpaid) remains unchanged. These other policies are described elsewhere in the handbook.

To take advantage of SPL the mother must commit, in writing, to ending their maternity/adoption leave and pay at a set date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from maternity or adoption leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and pay at a later date.

Terms

To help understand this policy the meaning of the following terms is listed below:

Mother: the woman who gives birth to a child or the adopter. The adopter means the male or female who is eligible for adoption leave and or pay.

Partner: the child's biological father or the partner of the mother/adopter. This may be a spouse, civil partner or a partner who is in an enduring relationship with the mother and the child.

SPL: Shared Parental Leave.

ShPP: Statutory Shared Parental Pay.

Continuous leave: a period of that is taken in one block, for example four weeks' leave.

Discontinuous Leave: a period of leave that is arranged around weeks where the employee will return to work for example an arrangement where an employee will work every other week for a period of three months.

SPLIT Day: Shared Parental Leave in Touch Day, allowing parents to 'keep in touch' by attending work without affecting their ShPP.

Match: when an adopter is approved to adopt a named child or children.

Curtail: where an eligible mother brings their maternity/adoption leave and if appropriate pay or allowance entitlement to an end early.

This policy applies to employees whether they are the mother or the partner. If it is the mother who is employed by us the mother's partner must follow his/her own employer's policy if She wishes to take a period of SPL. If it is the partner who is employed by us then *their* partner must follow *their own* employer's policy.

Good communication is essential with *both* employers to ensure requests are dealt with properly.

Eligibility for SPL

The following criteria must be met for this policy to apply to either the mother or partner as shown below:

Mother's eligibility for SPL

The **mother** is eligible for SPL if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or matching date of the child, and remains in continuous employment with the Company until the week before any period of SPL that is taken (continuity of employment test)
- have, at the date of the child's birth or placement, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child
- are entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave in respect of the child
- comply with the relevant leave curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity /adoption leave) and SPL notice and evidence requirements

In addition, for the mother to be eligible for SPL, the **partner** must:

- have been employed, been a worker or been a self-employed earner in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings meeting the lower earnings test for any 13 of those 66 weeks (employment and earnings test)
- have, at the date of the child's birth or placement, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child

Partner's eligibility for SPL

The **partner** is eligible for SPL if She:

- has at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or placement of the child and remains in continuous employment with the Company until the week before any period of SPL that She takes
- has, at the date of the child's birth or placement, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child
- complies with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements

In addition, for the partner to be eligible for SPL, the **mother** must:

- have been employed, been a worker or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth or placement of the child

- have average weekly earnings meeting the lower earnings test for any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have, at the date of the child's birth or placement, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- comply with the relevant leave curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity/adoption leave)

How to calculate the amount of SPL available

The amount of SPL to which an individual is entitled will depend on when the mother brings her maternity/adoption leave period to an end and the amount of leave that the other parent takes in respect of the child.

SPL may only be taken in complete weeks but may start on any day of the week. For example, if a week of SPL begins on a Tuesday it would finish on a Monday. An eligible employee can request to take SPL in one continuous block or may request it as a number of discontinuous blocks, with breaks between the leave where the employee returns to work. In requests of continuous blocks, the Company must agree to these as long as the correct notification has been given. A maximum of three requests for leave or amendments to leave booked can be made by each parent.

The first two weeks following birth are the compulsory maternity leave period and may only be taken by the mother. This means that the mother cannot curtail her maternity leave to take SPL until two weeks after the birth and the absolute maximum period that the parents could take as SPL is 50 weeks between them. In most cases mothers commence their maternity leave before their expected due date and so any time taken before the birth is also deducted from the available 50 weeks.

The mother's partner can begin a period of SPL at any time from the completion of the compulsory maternity leave period following the child's birth, or the date of the child's placement. However, she would lose their entitlement to the two weeks paid Paternity Leave if this has not been taken before the start of any SPL.

Notice requirements for SPL

To take advantage of SPL it is important that the following notifications are given in the correct timeframe. A notice of entitlement to SPL and a notice to take leave must be given.

An employee who is entitled and intending to take SPL must provide notification of their entitlement and intention to take SPL at least 8 weeks before they can take any period of SPL.

An employee may only make three leave notice requests or variations of leave notices during a period of SPL. A notice for discontinuous leave that has been withdrawn before it is agreed does not count towards the total number of requests for leave that an employee can make.

If the mother wishes to take SPL a curtailment notice must also be provided stating the date the maternity/adoption leave is to end. The curtailment notice is normally binding and cannot be revoked unless special circumstances apply.

The date that maternity/adoption leave is to end must be:

- after the compulsory maternity leave period, which is the two weeks after birth

- at least eight weeks after the date on which the mother gave the maternity/adoption leave curtailment notice to us
- at least one week before what would be the end of the additional maternity/adoption leave period

Information required in any SPL notice of entitlement

With the curtailment notice the employee must also provide us with the following details:

- the names of the mother and partner
- the start and end date of any statutory maternity or adoption leave
- the total amount of SPL available
- the child's expected week of birth, actual birth date or date of placement
- how much SPL the mother and partner each intend to take
- an indication as to when they intend to take the leave although this will not be binding
- a signed declaration to confirm that
 - they will be taking the leave to care for the child
 - the mother has given notice to end her maternity/adoption entitlement
 - the information they have given is true and accurate
 - should for whatever reason they cease to be eligible for SPL they will inform us

In addition, the mother's notice of entitlement must include a declaration signed by her partner stating:

- their name, address, and national insurance number
- that they are the father of the child; or married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of, the mother or adopter

If the employee is the partner, the partner's notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the names of the mother and partner
- the start and end date of any statutory maternity or adoption leave
- the total amount of SPL available
- the child's expected week of birth, actual birth date or date of placement
- how much SPL the mother and partner each intend to take
- an indication as to when they intend to take the leave although this will not be binding
- a signed declaration to confirm that: they will be taking the leave to care for the child, the mother has given notice to end her maternity/adoption entitlement and the information they have given is true and accurate

Within 14 days of receiving a notice of entitlement and notice to take leave from the employee, whether the mother or partner, the Company can request from the employee evidence of their entitlement as follows:

- a MATB1 Certificate, a matching certificate or birth certificate
- the name and address of the other parent's employer

The employee has 14 days from the request to provide the information.

How to book SPL

In addition to notifying us of entitlement to SPL/ShPP, an employee must also give notice to

take the leave (period of leave notice). In many cases, notice to take leave will be given at the same time as the notice of entitlement to SPL.

To take a period of SPL, the employee must write to us giving not less than eight weeks' notice before the start date of the first period of SPL. The notice must also be accompanied by dates when it is intended to claim ShPP, if applicable (see later section on ShPP).

The employee must set out the start and end dates of each period of SPL requested in that notice. This written notification can be a request for a continuous period of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

Continuous period of SPL

If an eligible employee submits a period of leave notice that requests one *continuous* period of leave, she will be automatically entitled to take that period of leave.

Discontinuous periods of SPL

An employee may submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave (a minimum of one week at a time). For example, the mother and partner could request a pattern of leave from their respective employers that allows them to alternate childcare responsibilities.

If the employee submits a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, the Company, in the two weeks beginning with the date the period of leave notice was given, can:

- consent to the pattern of leave requested
- propose an alternative pattern of leave, or
- refuse the pattern of leave requested

We will have to consider what impact the arrangements will have on the Company. If agreement is reached within those two weeks, the employee will be able to take the leave on the dates agreed.

If no agreement has been reached within that two-week discussion period, the employee is entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of SPL (the default provision). In that event, the employee can choose a start date for when this leave period will begin within 19 days of the date the original notification was given, but the leave cannot start sooner than the initial notified start date. If no date is notified within this time period the leave will begin on the start date stated in the original notification.

Alternatively, if the Company has refused the request or no agreement has been reached during the two-week discussion period, the employee may withdraw a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. The employee can withdraw a period of leave notice at any time on or before the 15th day after the period of leave notice was given.

Cancelling or varying curtailment notice

In certain circumstances the employee may wish to withdraw a maternity or adoption leave curtailment notice. In this case the request must be in writing and can be given only if the mother has not returned to work. It could only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- the mother and partner cease to be eligible for SPL or ShPP and the mother withdraws her maternity leave curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given

- if the notice was given before the birth, and the mother revokes the maternity or adoption leave curtailment notice in the six weeks following the birth (for mothers only)
- the partner has died

Sometimes circumstances change and the employee may need to change or cancel his/her proposed SPL dates. To do this they must write to us at least eight weeks before the dates varied begin and making clear what change they are seeking. This will count as a second notification.

The written notice must contain:

- an indication as to when the employee intends to take SPL (including the start and end dates for each period of SPL)
- details of any periods of SPL that have been notified through a period of leave notice
- details of any periods of ShPP that have been notified in relation to periods where SPL was not to be taken
- a declaration signed by the mother and the partner that they agree to the variation.

Rights during SPL

During SPL all terms and conditions of the employee's contract except remuneration continue. Pay will be replaced by ShPP if the employee is eligible for it.

Communication and SPLIT Days

Whilst an employee is on SPL the Company will try to keep them up to date with important changes and developments within the business. It is also helpful to discuss the employee's plans to return to work during this time.

An employee can agree to work for the Company (or to attend training) for up to 20 days during their SPL without that work bringing the period of his/her SPL and ShPP to an end. These are known as "Shared Parental Leave in Touch" (SPLIT) days. If an employee is entitled to receive ShPP for any week during which they attend work for SPLIT days, they will still receive this in the usual way. In addition, an employee taking a SPLIT day will receive full pay for any day worked thus effectively topping up ShPP. Any SPLIT days worked do not extend the period of SPL.

There is no obligation on the Company to offer work or on the employee to accept it. An employee with the agreement of the Company may use SPLIT days to work part of a week during SPL. The Company and the employee may use SPLIT days to affect a gradual return to work by the employee towards the end of a long period of SPL.

Returning to work following SPL

On returning to work after SPL, the employee is entitled to return to the same job they held before commencing leave if the aggregate total statutory maternity/paternity/adoption leave and SPL amounts to 26 weeks or less.

If the aggregate total statutory maternity/paternity/adoption leave and SPL amounts to more than 26 weeks the employee has the right to return to the same job they held before commencing leave or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable and appropriate and on terms and conditions no less favourable.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SHPP)

Eligible employees may be entitled to take up to 37 weeks ShPP while taking SPL. The number of weeks available will depend on the amount by which the mother or adopter reduces their

maternity or adoption pay period or maternity allowance. The first 2 weeks is compulsory maternity leave hence the first 2 weeks will be taken as statutory maternity or adoption pay. In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements for SPL, an employee seeking to claim ShPP must further satisfy each of the following criteria:

- the mother/adopter must be or have been entitled to statutory maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance and must have reduced the pay period
- the employee must intend to care for the child
- the employee must have average weekly earnings for the period 8 weeks leading up to and including the 15th week before the child's expected due date or matching date that are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- the employee must be in continuous employment until the first week of ShPP has begun
- the employee must give proper notification in accordance with the following:
 - must give written notice advising their entitlement to ShPP at least 8 weeks before receiving ShPP (this is normally given as part of the notice of entitlement to take SPL).
 - written notice of entitlement to receive ShPP must include
 - start and end dates of any maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance
 - total amount of ShPP available, amount of ShPP the employee and their partner intend to claim and a non-binding indication of when the employee is expected to claim
 - a signed declaration from the employee confirming that the information is correct, that they meet the criteria for ShPP and will immediately inform the Company if they cease to be eligible

It must be accompanied by a signed declaration from the partner confirming their agreement to the employee claiming ShPP and for the Company to process any ShPP payments to the employee and (in the case where the partner is the mother or adopter) they have reduced their maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance, and they will immediately inform their partner should they cease to satisfy the eligibility conditions.

Any ShPP due will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year.

CARER'S LEAVE POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all of our employees, irrespective of their length of service.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

Dependant: spouse, civil partner, child, or parent of the employee or a person living in the same household as the employee (other than as a boarder, lodger, or tenant) or who reasonably relies on the employee to provide or arrange care.

A Dependant has a long-term care need if they have a condition (mental or physical) requiring care or likely to require care for more than three months; if they have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010; or they have care needs associated with old age.

Eligibility

Employees who wish to provide or arrange care for a Dependant with a long-term care need.

Entitlement

Eligible employees are entitled to one week of unpaid leave per rolling 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a Dependant.

Leave can be taken in full days, half days, or as a continuous week.

Notification and Request Procedure

Employees must provide notice equal to twice the length of the requested leave or three days, whichever is greater. Notice can be given verbally; however, for record-keeping purposes, we encourage submitting written notice when possible.

Postponement of Leave

We may postpone carer's leave if it is determined that the absence would unduly disrupt business operations. Should this happen, we will offer an alternative period of leave, of the same length, within one month of the originally requested period. We will inform the employee of any postponement within seven days of the request.

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Introduction

We recognise that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face.

This policy sets out our commitment to supporting bereaved parents through their grief by ensuring they can take parental bereavement leave.

The policy applies to employees who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 and includes parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Who can take parental bereavement leave

Whatever your length of service, you can take this type of leave if you are the parent of the child who has passed away, or the partner of the child's parent. In general, you can take this type of leave if you have parental responsibility for the child. This includes adoptive parents.

If you have suffered a bereavement but are unsure if you are entitled to parental bereavement leave, please contact your manager for clarification.

How much leave a bereaved parent can take

You can take two weeks of parental bereavement leave. You can take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks; or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

You cannot take the leave as individual days.

You can take the leave at the time(s) you choose within the 56 weeks after your bereavement. You might choose, for example, to take it at a particularly difficult time such as your child's birthday.

If you have lost more than one child, you have a separate entitlement to bereavement leave for each child who has passed away.

Notice to take parental bereavement leave

If you need to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after your bereavement, you can take the leave straight away. You do not have to provide any notice. Please let your manager know no later than when you are due to start work on the first day on which you wish to take leave or, if that is not feasible, as soon as you can.

To take leave more than 56 days after your bereavement, please give your manager at least one week's notice.

Changing your mind about taking parental bereavement leave

You can cancel your planned leave and take it at a different time (within the 56 weeks after your bereavement). Where your planned leave was due to begin during the first 56 days after your bereavement, please let your manager know you no longer wish to take it before your normal start time on the first day of the planned leave.

Where your leave was due to begin more than 56 days after your bereavement, please let your manager know at least one week in advance that you wish to cancel it.

You cannot cancel any week of parental bereavement leave that has already begun.

Pay during parental bereavement leave

To receive statutory parental bereavement pay, you must have:

- at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us by the week before the one in which your child passed away (and still be employed by us on the date of the bereavement); and
- normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before your bereavement of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes.

If you are unsure if you are entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay, please contact your manager who will be able to advise you.

If you qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay, you will be paid during your leave at the rate set by the Government, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings where this figure is lower. If you are not eligible, your leave will be unpaid.

You need to give us notice of the weeks for which you wish to claim statutory parental bereavement pay.

You must normally sign and return a form to one of the Partners within 28 days of the first day for which you are claiming. However, if that is not possible, please sign and return the form as soon as you can.

Rights during parental bereavement leave