



Family Friendly Policies

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Maternity Leave

Pregnant employees are entitled to take up to a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave.

You should inform your manager in writing that you are pregnant as soon as possible, and in any event before the end of the 15th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). Once you have done this you are entitled to take reasonable paid time off work to attend appointments as advised by your doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor. You must provide a MATB1 as soon as possible, confirming your EWC.

Shared Maternity Leave (Additional Paternity Leave)

If you intend to return to work early without using your full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave, you may be eligible to transfer up to 26 weeks of your outstanding maternity leave to your spouse, civil partner or partner, or the father of your child, to be taken as additional paternity leave (and additional statutory paternity pay) on your return to work.

The earliest that additional paternity leave may commence is 20 weeks after the date on which your child is born and it must end no later than 12 months after the date of birth.

The minimum period of additional paternity leave is two consecutive weeks and the maximum period is 26 weeks. Employees must therefore have at least two weeks of maternity leave that remain unexpired.

Further details will need to be obtained from your spouse's or partner's employer. If you do wish to share part of your maternity leave entitlement in this way, you will be required to submit a written and signed declaration form to that employer, who may also make additional enquiries of us to verify their employee's entitlement to additional paternity leave and pay.

Maternity Pay

You may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay if you meet certain requirements. Please speak to your manager about this.

Adoption Leave

Eligible employees are entitled to time off to care for a child who has been newly placed for adoption. An eligible employee may take up to 52 weeks adoption leave. All employees are eligible to apply for adoption leave provided you have been employed continuously for at least 26 weeks before the beginning of the week you were matched with the child. However, where a couple jointly adopt, only one of you will be entitled to take statutory adoption leave and we may require evidence of this.

Paternity Leave

When your wife, partner or civil partner gives birth or adopts a child you may be entitled to paternity leave and pay. To qualify all of the following must apply:

- you must be the biological father or adopter of the child or be the mother's husband, partner or civil partner or have responsibility for the child's upbringing.

- you must have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due or the child matched.
- you must give 28 days' notice of the leave you intend to take.
- you must continue to work for us up to the date of birth or placement.

You are permitted to take up to two weeks' statutory paternity leave at any point within 52 weeks of the birth of the child. Such leave can be split up into two separate blocks of one week, you are not permitted to take odd days off. You may also be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay if you meet certain requirements. Further information can be obtained from your Line Manager.

Carers Leave

If you have long term caring responsibilities for a dependant (including arranging care for a dependant), subject to meeting the qualifying criteria you may be eligible to take carers leave in line with the Carers Leave Regulations 2024.

A dependant is defined as a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or person who lives in the same household as you. You may be entitled to take one weeks' unpaid leave in any 12 month period for which you would be eligible to take from the start of your employment. Such leave can be taken in one single block or in individual days or half days. You must give notice equivalent to twice as many days in advance of the first day of leave, or three days in advance of the earliest day or part day, whichever is earlier.

Further information can be obtained from your Line Manager.

Parental Leave

You may be eligible for 18 weeks unpaid parental leave if you have at least one year's service and responsibility for the care of a child or adopted child up to the child's 18th birthday.

The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child. You must take parental leave as whole weeks (eg 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your we agree otherwise or if your child is disabled.

In certain circumstances we may turn down your request for leave. If we do, we will suggest to you a new date for taking the leave within 6 months of your original request date.

Time Off for Dependants

You are allowed reasonable unpaid time off to cope with unexpected emergency crises in respect of your dependants. Examples of this type of leave are:

- If a dependant falls ill, is injured, assaulted, or gives birth.
- Your child is involved in a serious incident at school or during school hours.
- Your childcare or other arrangements break down.

Please speak to your manager if you require any further information.

Parental Bereavement Leave

This policy reiterates our commitment to supporting employees through their grief by ensuring that bereaved parents can take parental bereavement leave.

This policy applies to employees who have suffered the loss of a child (i.e. under the age of 18) on or after 6 April 2020. The policy also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Whatever your length of service, you can take parental bereavement leave if you are the:

- parent of a child who has passed away; or
- partner of the child's parent, where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away and their parent; or
- "parent in fact" of a child who has passed away, which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, you have been living with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but you have not been paid to look after the child);
- "intended parent" of a child who has passed away, i.e. a parent using a surrogate;
- "natural parent" of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e. where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent; or
- adopter of a child who has passed away.

A bereaved parent can take one or two weeks' parental bereavement leave, for each child who has passed away.

Parental bereavement leave cannot be taken as individual days.

If you are a bereaved parent, you are able to take the leave as:

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

The leave must be taken within 56 weeks of the date of the death of your child.

This lengthy period recognises that, as a bereaved parent, you may need some flexibility as to when you take the leave. For example, you may:

- wish to take leave around the first anniversary of your child's death or at another particular time that is special, such as your child's birthday; or
- already be on another type of leave, such as maternity leave or sickness absence.

Informal notification, such as a phone call or email to your manager, is sufficient to take parental bereavement leave. Leave can be taken straightaway; you do not have to provide a period of notice.

To be eligible for statutory parental bereavement pay, employees who are on parental bereavement leave are required to have:

- at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with their employer by the week before the week in which their child passes away, and still be employed by that employer on the day on which the child passed away; and

- normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before the child's death that are no less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes.

If you take parental bereavement leave and qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay, you will be paid at the current statutory rate. A non-eligible employee's parental bereavement leave will be unpaid.