

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES



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Time Off for Antenatal Appointments Policy

This policy outlines the statutory right to take time off to attend antenatal appointments.

This policy applies to employees and agency workers. It does not apply to self-employed contractors.

If you are an agency worker, the rights set out in this policy only apply to you once you have worked in the same role with us for at least 12 continuous weeks (which may include more than one assignment). For these purposes we will ignore any breaks due to holiday or other leave to which you are entitled, breaks due to industrial action, breaks of up to 28 weeks in cases of sickness or jury service, and breaks of up to six weeks for any other reason. We will treat breaks due to pregnancy or childbirth up to 26 weeks after birth, and any statutory maternity, paternity or adoption leave, as time worked.

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

Time off if you are pregnant

If you are pregnant, you may take reasonable paid time off during working hours for antenatal appointments. This may include any relaxation or parenting classes that your doctor, midwife or health visitor has advised you to attend.

Please try to give us as much notice as possible of the appointment. We may ask you to provide the following, unless it is your first appointment:

- a certificate from your doctor, midwife or health visitor stating that you are pregnant; and
- an appointment card.

Time off for accompanying a pregnant woman: eligibility

You may take time off to accompany a pregnant woman to an antenatal appointment if you have a "qualifying relationship" with the woman or the child. This means that either:

- you are the baby's father
- you are the pregnant woman's spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner
- she has undergone assisted conception and at that time you were her wife or civil partner or gave the required legal notices to be treated in law as the second female parent or
- you are one of the intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement and expect to obtain a parental order in respect of the child

Time off for accompanying a pregnant woman: how to book time off

Please give us as much notice of the appointment as possible. You must provide us with a signed statement providing the date and time of the appointment and confirming:

- that you meet one of the eligibility criteria
- that the purpose of the time off is to accompany the pregnant woman to an antenatal appointment and
- that the appointment has been made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered nurse

Time off for accompanying a pregnant woman: amount of time off

You may take time off to accompany a pregnant woman to up to two antenatal appointments in relation to each pregnancy.

You must not take more than six and a half hours off for each appointment, including travel and waiting time.

Whether time off for these appointments is paid is at our discretion.

If you wish to take time off to attend further antenatal appointments, you should request annual leave.

Time off for Adoption Appointment Policy

This policy outlines the statutory right to take time off to attend adoption appointments.

This policy applies to employees and agency workers. It does not apply to self-employed contractors.

If you are an agency worker, the rights set out in this policy only apply to you once you have worked in the same role with us for at least 12 continuous weeks (which may include more than one assignment). For these purposes we will ignore any breaks due to holiday or other leave to which you are entitled, breaks due to workplace closure, breaks due to industrial action, breaks of up to 28 weeks in cases of sickness or jury service, and breaks of up to six weeks for any other reason. We will treat breaks due to pregnancy or childbirth up to 26 weeks after birth, and any statutory maternity, paternity or adoption leave, as time worked.

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

Time off for an adoption appointment

An adoption appointment is an appointment arranged by an adoption agency (or at the agency's request) for you to have contact with a child who is to be placed with you for adoption, or for any other purpose related to the adoption.

You may take time off to attend an adoption appointment once the agency has notified you that a child is to be placed with you for adoption but before the child is actually placed with you.

If you are adopting a child with another person

Where you and your partner are adopting a child, you must decide between you who will be treated as the primary adopter and who will be treated as the secondary adopter for the purposes of time off. You must tell us your decision the first time you request time off for an adoption appointment. This will affect how much time you can take off and whether it is paid.

You will usually choose to be the primary adopter if you intend to take adoption leave when the child is placed with you. You would not be able to take paternity leave if you have elected to be the primary adopter.

You will usually choose to be the secondary adopter if you intend to take paternity leave when the child is placed with you, although you may be able to take adoption leave if your partner is not taking it.

If you are adopting a child alone

If you are adopting a child alone, you are treated as the primary adopter.

If you are adopting more than one child

If the agency is placing more than one child with you as part of the same arrangement, this is treated as one adoption and will not increase the number of appointments you can take time off to attend. Any time off under this policy must be taken before the first child is placed with you.

Amount of time off

If you are adopting on your own or have elected to be the primary adopter, you may take paid time off to attend an adoption appointment on up to five occasions in relation to any particular adoption.

If you are the secondary adopter, you may take time off to attend an adoption appointment on up to two occasions only. Whether this time off is paid is at our discretion.

You must not take more than six and a half hours off for each appointment, including travel and waiting time.

How to book time off

Please give us as much notice of the appointment as possible. You must provide your manager with a signed statement or an email confirming:

- The date and time of the appointment
- That the appointment has been arranged or requested by the adoption agency
- Whether you are adopting a child alone or jointly with another person
- If you are adopting with another person, whether you are electing to take paid or unpaid time off

If you are an agency worker, you may have to notify your agency as well. You should check with the agency.

We may sometimes ask you to try and rearrange an appointment where it is reasonable to do so. In exceptional circumstances we reserve the right to refuse a request for a particular appointment, but we will not do so without good reason.

Maternity Leave Policy

This policy outlines the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who are pregnant or have recently given birth and set out the arrangements for pregnancy-related sickness, health and safety, and maternity leave.

Arrangements for time off for antenatal care and to accompany a pregnant woman to antenatal appointments are set out in our Time Off for Antenatal Appointments Policy

In some cases, you and your spouse or partner may be eligible to opt into the shared parental leave (SPL) scheme which gives you more flexibility to share the leave and pay available in the first year. You will need to give us at least eight week's notice to opt into SPL, and you must remain on maternity leave until at least two weeks after birth. For information about SPL, see our Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Policy.

This policy only applies to employees and does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

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

Entitlement to maternity leave

All employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave, consisting of 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML) and 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML).

Stillbirth and neonatal loss

You are entitled to maternity leave in accordance with this policy if your child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy or born alive at any stage of pregnancy but does not survive (neonatal loss). If eligible, you will also be entitled to maternity pay.

Notification

Please inform us as soon as possible that you are pregnant. This is important as there may be health and safety considerations.

Before the end of the 15th week before the week that you expect to give birth (Qualifying Week), or as soon as reasonably practical afterwards, you must tell us:

- the week in which your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth (Expected Week of Childbirth) and
- the date on which you would like to start your maternity leave (Intended Start Date)

We will write to you within 28 days to tell you the date we will expect you to return to work if you take your full maternity leave entitlement (Expected Return Date).

Once you receive a certificate from a doctor or midwife confirming your Expected Week of Childbirth (MATB1), you must provide us with a copy.

Starting maternity leave

The earliest you can start maternity leave is 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (unless your child is born prematurely before that date).

If you want to change your Intended Start Date please tell us in writing. You should give us as much notice as you can, but wherever possible you must tell us at least 28 days before the original Intended

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Start Date (or the new start date if you are bringing the date forward). We will then write to you within 28 days to tell you your new expected return date.

Your maternity leave should normally start on the Intended Start Date. However, it may start earlier if you give birth before your Intended Start Date, or if you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason in the last four weeks before your Expected Week of Childbirth. In either of those cases, maternity leave will start on the following day.

Shortly before your maternity leave is due to start, we will discuss with you the arrangements for covering your work and the opportunities for you to remain in contact, should you wish to do so, during your leave. Unless you request otherwise, you will remain on circulation lists for internal news, job vacancies, training and work-related social events.

The law says that we cannot allow you to work during the two weeks following childbirth.

Maternity pay

Statutory maternity pay (SMP) is payable for up to 39 weeks provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the Qualifying Week and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. The first six weeks SMP are paid at 90% of your average earnings and the remaining 33 weeks are at a rate set by the government each year.

SMP is subject to deductions for tax, national insurance and any other deductions that the Company may legally make. If you do not qualify for SMP, you may be able to claim Maternity Allowance (MA).

During maternity leave

With the exception of terms relating to pay, your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during OML and AML.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during maternity leave and can be carried over to the next holiday year where necessary as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we shall make employer pension contributions during OML and any period of paid AML, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any maternity pay you are receiving, unless you inform your line manager that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Keeping in Touch

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your maternity leave although we will keep this to a minimum. This may include contacting you to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

You may work (including attending training) on up to ten "keeping-in-touch" days during your maternity leave. This is not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with your line manager.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a keeping-in-touch day and this will be inclusive of any maternity pay entitlement.

Returning to Work

You must return to work on the Expected Return Date unless you tell us otherwise. If you wish to return to work earlier than the Expected Return Date, you must give us eight weeks' prior notice of the date. It is helpful if you give this notice in writing. You may be able to return later than the Expected Return Date if you request annual leave or parental leave, which will be at our discretion.

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You are normally entitled to return to work in the position you held before starting maternity leave, and on the same terms of employment. However, if you have taken AML and it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return into the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable.

If you want to change your hours or other working arrangements on return from maternity leave you should make a request under our Flexible Working Policy. It is helpful if such requests are made as early as possible.

If you decided not to return to work you must inform your manager, giving the appropriate notice in accordance with your contract.

Adoption Leave Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for adoption leave and pay for employees who are:

- Adopting a child through a UK adoption agency
- Fostering a child with a view to possible adoption
- Having a child through a surrogate mother

Arrangements for time off for adoption appointments are set out in our Time off for Adoption Appointments Policy.

In some cases, you and your spouse or partner may be eligible to opt into the shared parental leave (SPL) scheme which gives you more flexibility to share leave and pay available in the first year. For information, see our Shared Parental Leave (Adoption and Surrogacy) Policy.

This policy only applies to employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

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

Entitlement to adoption leave

In an adoption case or a fostering for adoption case, you are entitled to adoption leave if all the following conditions are met:

- You are adopting a child through a UK adoption agency, or you are a local authority foster parent who has been approved as a prospective adopter
- The adoption agency or local authority has given you written notice that it has matched you with a child, and tells you the expected placement date
- You have told the agency or local authority that you agree to the placement

Adoption leave may be available if you are adopting through an overseas adoption agency. Please contact your line manager for information on eligibility and process.

In a surrogacy case, you are entitled to adoption leave if all the following conditions are met:

- A surrogate mother gives birth to a child, who is biologically the child of either you, or your spouse or partner (or both of you)
- You expect to be given parental responsibility under a parental order from the court. The child must live with you and you must apply for the parental order within six months of birth

In either case, only one parent can take adoption leave. If your spouse or partner takes adoption leave with their employer, you may be entitled to paternity leave (see our Paternity Leave Policy). In some cases, you may also qualify for shared parental leave (see our Shared Parental Leave (Adoption and Surrogacy) Policy).

The maximum adoption leave entitlement is 52 weeks, consisting of 26 weeks' Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) and 26 weeks' Additional Adoption Leave (AAL).

Notification requirements

In an adoption or fostering for adoption case, you must tell us in writing of the expected placement date, and your intended start date for adoption leave. You must give this information not more than seven days after the agency or local authority notifies you in writing that it has matched you with a child, or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as you can.

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Once you receive the matching certificate from the agency or local authority, you must provide us with a copy.

In a surrogacy case, you must tell us in writing of your intention to take adoption leave and give the expected week of childbirth (EWC). You must give this information by the end of the 15th week before the EWC, or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as you can. You must also complete a declaration confirming your entitlement. When the child is born you must tell us the date of birth.

We will write to you within 28 days of receiving your notification, to confirm your expected return date assuming you take your full entitlement to adoption leave.

Starting adoption leave

In an adoption or fostering for adoption case, OAL may start on a date of your choosing no more than 14 days before the expected placement date, or on the date of placement itself, but no later.

If you want to change your intended start date, please tell us in writing. You should give as much notice as you can, but wherever possible you must tell us at least 28 days before the original intended start date (or the new start date if you are bringing the date forward). We will write to you within 28 days to tell you your new expected return date.

In a surrogacy case, OAL will start on the day the child is born, unless you are at work, in which case it will start on the following day. You cannot change the start date.

Adoption pay

Statutory adoption pay (SAP) is payable for up to 39 weeks provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us ending with the Qualifying Week (the week in which the adoption agency or local authority notified you of a match, or the 15th week before the EWC) and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. The first six weeks' SAP are paid at 90% of your average earnings and the remaining 33 weeks are at a rate set by the government each year.

During adoption leave

All the terms and conditions of your employment remain in force during OAL and AAL, except for the terms relating to pay.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue adoption leave and can be carried over to the next holiday year where necessary as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we shall make employer pension contributions during OAL and any further period of paid adoption leave based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any adoption pay you are receiving, unless you inform your line manager that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Keeping in touch

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your adoption leave although we will keep this to a minimum. This may include contacting you to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

You may work (including attending training) on up to ten "keeping-in-touch" days during your adoption leave. This is not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with your line manager.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a keeping-in-touch day and this will be inclusive of any adoption pay entitlement. Alternatively, you may agree with your line manager to receive the equivalent paid time off in lieu.

Returning to work

You must return to work on the expected return date unless you tell us otherwise. If you wish to return to work early, you must give us at least eight weeks' notice of the date. It is helpful if you give this notice in writing. You may be able to return later than the expected return date if you request annual leave or parental leave, which will be at our discretion.

You are normally entitled to return to work in the position you held before starting adoption leave, on the same terms of employment. However, if you have taken AAL (or have combined your adoption leave with more than four weeks of parental leave) and it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return to the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable.

If you want to change your hours or other working arrangements on return from adoption leave you should make a request under our Flexible Working Policy. It is helpful if such requests are made as early as possible.

If you decide you do not want to return to work, you should give notice of resignation in accordance with your contract.

Paternity Leave 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.

You may be entitled to time off to accompany your partner to antenatal appointments or to attend adoption appointments. For more information see the Time Off for Antenatal Appointments Policy or the Time Off for Adoption Appointments Policy.

In some cases, you and your partner may be eligible to opt into the shared parental leave (SPL) scheme which gives you more flexibility to share the leave and pay available in the first year. This is addition to your right to take paternity leave. For information about SPL, see our Shared Parental Leave (Birth) and Shared Parental Leave (Adoption and Surrogacy) Policies.

Entitlement to paternity leave

Paternity leave is available on the birth of a child if:

- you are the biological father and will have some responsibility for the child's upbringing
- you are the partner (that is, spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner) of the mother and will have the main responsibility (with the mother) for the child's upbringing or
- the child is born to a surrogate mother where you are, or your partner is, one of the child's biological parents, and you expect to obtain a parental order giving you and your partner legal responsibility for the child

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 which the agency notifies you that you have been matched with a child.

In adoption or surrogacy cases you may be entitled to take adoption leave instead (see our Adoption Policy). However, adoption leave may only be taken by one parent. Paternity leave is available to the other parent (of either sex).

Stillbirth and neonatal loss

If eligible, you are entitled to paternity leave and pay if your child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy or is born alive at any stage of pregnancy but does not survive (neonatal loss). However, you may have less time in which to take your leave.

Taking paternity leave

Paternity leave is a period of up to two weeks' leave taken when a child is born or placed with you for adoption. You may choose to take:

- a single period of leave of either one week or two weeks or
- two separate periods of leave of one week each

You can start your leave on the date of birth or placement, or a later date of your choosing. Leave can be taken within 52 weeks of the birth or placement. (If the baby is premature the period ends 52 weeks after the start of the expected week of childbirth.)

If you wish to take paternity leave you must give us written evidence of your entitlement by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (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. This notice should state:

- either:
 - the expected week of childbirth (and, in surrogacy cases, that you and your partner are parental order parents of the child); or
 - the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child, the date on which the child is expected to be placed with the adopter and that you wish to receive paternity pay rather than adoption pay in respect of the child; and
- that you are the father of the child, or that you are not the child's father but are either the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother or adopter (or, in surrogacy cases, of the other parental order parent); and
- that you expect to have the main responsibility (apart from your spouse, civil partner or partner) for the child's upbringing.

To choose a period of paternity leave, you must give us written notice at least 28 days before the chosen start date (or no more than seven days after the adoption agency notifies you of being matched with a child), or as soon as you reasonably can, stating:

- the start date of the leave (which may be a specified date after the start of the expected week of childbirth or the expected adoption placement date, the actual date of the birth or adoption placement, or a specified number of days after the birth or adoption placement); and
- the duration of the leave; and
- that the purpose of the leave will be to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adopter (or, in surrogacy cases, the other parental order parent).

You can change the intended start date by giving us written notice at least 28 days before the earlier of the original start date or the new start date (or as soon as you reasonably can). Your notice of variation must confirm that the purpose of the new period of leave is to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adopter (or, in surrogacy cases, the other parental order parent).

You can cancel a period of leave by giving us written notice at least 28 days before the start date, or as soon as you reasonably can.

You must give us written notice of the child's date of birth or placement for adoption as soon as you reasonably can afterwards.

You will still be able to take paternity leave on your chosen dates if your child dies or is stillborn, if an adoption placement is ended, or (in surrogacy cases) if a parental order is not sought within six months of birth or an application for a parental order is refused. If you wish to vary the dates you have chosen for your paternity leave period, please speak to your manager. If you have not already notified us of your chosen dates before one of these events occurs, you may still choose to take paternity leave, but it must be taken within the next eight weeks. You may also be entitled to take parental bereavement leave (see our Parental bereavement leave policy).

Paternity Pay

Statutory paternity pay (SPP) is payable during paternity 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.

Paternity Pay is subject to deductions for tax, national insurance and any other deductions that Aura Retrofit Limited may legally make.

During paternity leave

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

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during paternity leave. Any holiday that you are unable to take in the relevant holiday year due to a period of paternity leave can be carried over to the next holiday year as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we shall make employer pension contributions during paternity leave, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any paternity pay you are receiving, unless you inform your line manager that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Policy

This policy outlines the arrangements for shared parental leave (**SPL**) and pay in relation to the birth of a child. If you are adopting a child, please see the Shared Parental Leave (Adoption and Surrogacy) Policy instead.

This policy applies to employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

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

Frequently used terms

The definitions in this paragraph apply in this policy.

- **Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC):** the week, beginning on a Sunday, in which the doctor or midwife expects your child to be born.
- **Parent:** One of two people who will share the main responsibility for the child's upbringing (and who may be either the mother, the father, or the mother's partner if not the father).
- **Partner:** your spouse, civil partner or someone living with you in an enduring family relationship, but not your sibling, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.
- **Qualifying Week:** the 15th week before the EWC.

What is shared parental leave?

SPL gives you and your partner more flexibility in how to share the care of your child in the first year after birth than simply taking maternity and paternity leave. Assuming you are both eligible, you will be able to choose how to split the available leave between you and can decide to be off work at the same time or at different times. You may be able to take leave in more than one block.

Entitlement to SPL

You are entitled to SPL in relation to the birth of a child if:

- you are the child's mother, and share the main responsibility for the care of the child with the child's father or with your partner
- you are the child's father and share the main responsibility for the care of the child with the child's mother or
- you are the mother's partner and share the main responsibility for the care of the child with the mother (where the child's father does not share the main responsibility with the mother)

The following conditions must also be fulfilled:

- you must have at least 26 weeks continuous employment with us by the end of the Qualifying Week, and still be employed by us in the week before the leave is to be taken
- the other parent must have worked (in an employed or self-employed capacity) in at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the EWC and had average weekly earnings of at least £30 during 13 of those weeks and
- you and the other parent must give the necessary statutory notices and declarations as summarised below, including notice to end any maternity leave, statutory maternity pay (SMP) or maternity allowance (MA) periods

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The total amount of SPL available is 52 weeks, less the weeks spent by the child's mother on maternity leave (or the weeks in which the mother has been in receipt of SMP or MA if she is not entitled to maternity leave).

If you are the mother, you cannot start SPL until after the compulsory maternity leave period, which lasts until two weeks after birth or four weeks for factory workers.

If you are entitled to paternity leave (see our Paternity Leave Policy), this is in addition to any SPL entitlement.

Opting in to shared parental leave and pay

Not less than eight weeks before the date you intend your SPL to start, you must give us a written opt-in notice giving:

- your name and the name of the other parent;
- if you are the child's mother, the start and end dates of your maternity leave;
- if you are the child's father or the mother's partner, the start and end dates of the mother's maternity leave, or if she is not entitled to maternity leave, the start and end dates of any SMP or MA period;
- the total SPL available, which is 52 weeks minus the number of weeks' maternity leave, SMP or MA period taken or to be taken;
- how many weeks of the available SPL will be allocated to you and how many to the other parent (you can change the allocation by giving us a further written notice, and you do not have to use your full allocation);
- if you are claiming statutory shared parental pay (ShPP), the total ShPP available, which is 39 weeks minus the number of weeks of the SMP or MA period taken or to be taken);
- how many weeks of available ShPP will be allocated to you and how much to the other parent. (You can change the allocation by giving us a further written notice, and you do not have to use your full allocation);
- an indication of the pattern of leave you are thinking of taking, including suggested start and end dates for each period of leave. This indication will not be binding at this stage, but please give as much information as you can about your future intentions; and
- declarations by you and the other parent that you both meet the statutory conditions to enable you to take SPL and ShPP.

Ending your maternity leave

If you are the child's mother and want to opt into the SPL scheme, you must give us at least eight weeks' written notice to end your maternity leave (a curtailment notice) before you can take SPL. The notice must state the date your maternity leave will end. You can give the notice before or after you give birth, but you cannot end your maternity leave until at least two weeks after birth.

You must also give us, at the same time as the curtailment notice, a notice to opt into the SPL scheme or a written declaration that the other parent has given their employer an opt-in notice and that you have given the necessary declarations in that notice.

The other parent may be eligible to take SPL from their employer before your maternity leave ends, provided you have given the curtailment notice.

The curtailment notice is binding and cannot usually be revoked. You can only revoke a curtailment notice if maternity leave has not yet ended and one of the following applies:

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- if you realise that neither you nor the other parent are in fact eligible for SPL or ShPP, in which case you can revoke the curtailment notice in writing up to eight weeks after it was given;
- if you gave the curtailment notice before giving birth, you can revoke it in writing up to eight weeks after it was given, or up to six weeks after birth, whichever is later; or
- if the other parent has died.

Once you have revoked a curtailment notice you will be unable to opt back into the SPL scheme.

Ending your partner's maternity leave or pay

If you are not the mother, but the mother is still on maternity leave or claiming SMP or MA, you will only be able to take SPL once she has either:

- returned to work;
- given her employer a curtailment notice to end her maternity leave;
- given her employer a curtailment notice to end her SMP (if she is entitled to SMP but not maternity leave); or
- given the benefits office a curtailment notice to end her MA (if she is not entitled to maternity leave or SMP).

Evidence of entitlement

You must also provide on request:

- A copy of the birth certificate (or if you have not yet obtained a birth certificate, a signed declaration of the child's date and place of birth); and
- The name and address of the other parent's employer (or a declaration that they have no employer).

Booking your SPL dates

Having opted into the SPL system, you must book your leave by giving us a period of leave notice. This may be given at the same time as the opt-in notice or later, provided it is at least eight weeks before the start of SPL.

The period of leave notice can either give the dates you want to take leave or, if the child has not been born yet, it can state the number of days after birth that you want the leave to start and end. This may be particularly useful if you intend to take paternity leave starting on the date of birth and wish to take SPL straight afterwards.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

If your period of leave notice gives a single continuous block of SPL, you will be entitled to take the leave set out in the notice.

If your period of leave notice requests split periods of SPL, with periods of work in between, we will consider your request as set out below.

You can give up to three period of leave notices. This may enable you to take up to three separate blocks of SPL (although if you give a notice to vary or cancel a period of leave this will in most cases count as a further period of leave notice). In exceptional circumstances we may allow you to give more than three period of leave notices but there is no obligation for us to do so.

Procedure for requesting split periods of SPL

In general, a period of leave notice should set out a single continuous block of leave. We may be willing to consider a period of leave notice where the SPL is split into shorter periods with periods of work in between. It is best to discuss this with your manager and HR in good time before formally submitting your period of leave notice. This will give us more time to consider the request and hopefully agree a pattern of leave with you from the start.

If you want to request split periods of SPL, you must set out the requested pattern of leave in your period of leave notice. We will either agree to the request or start a two-week discussion period. At the end of that period, we will confirm any agreed arrangements in writing. If we have not reached agreement, you will be entitled to take the full amount of requested SPL as one continuous block, starting on the start date given in your notice (for example, if you requested three separate periods of four weeks each, they will be combined into one 12-week period of leave). Alternatively, you may:

- choose a new start date (which must be at least eight weeks after your original period of leave notice was given), and tell us within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period; or
- withdraw your period of leave notice within two days of the end of the two-week discussion period (in which case the notice will not be counted, and you may submit a new one if you choose).

Changing the dates or cancelling your SPL

You can cancel a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the start date in the period of leave notice.

You can change the start date for a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the original start date and the new start date, whichever is earlier.

You can change the end date for a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the original end date and the new end date, whichever is earlier.

You can combine discontinuous periods of leave into a single continuous period of leave. Since this will involve a change to the start date or end date of a period of leave, see the paragraphs above which set out how much notice is required.

You can request that a continuous period of leave be split into two or more discontinuous periods with periods of work in between. Since this will involve a change to the start date or end date, see the paragraphs above which set out how much notice is required for the request. We do not have to grant your request but will consider it as set out in the section above.

A notice to change or cancel a period of leave will count as one of your three period of leave notices, unless:

- the variation is a result of your child being born earlier or later than the EWC;
- you are cancelling a request for discontinuous leave within two days of the end of the two-week discussion period;
- the variation is at our request; or
- we agree otherwise.

Premature birth

Where the child is born early (before the beginning of the EWC), you may be able to start SPL in the eight weeks following birth even though you cannot give eight weeks' notice. The following rules apply:

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- If you have given a period of leave notice to start SPL on a set date in the eight weeks following the EWC, but your child is born early, you can move the SPL start date forward by the same number of days, provided you notify us in writing of the change as soon as you can. (If your period of leave notice already contained a start date which was a set number of days after birth, rather than a set date, then no notice of change is necessary.)
- If your child is born more than eight weeks early and you want to take SPL in the eight weeks following birth, please submit your opt-in notice and your period of leave notice as soon as you can.

Shared parental pay

You may be able to claim Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) of up to 39 weeks (less any weeks of SMP or MA claimed by you or your partner) if you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the Qualifying Week and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. ShPP is paid by employers at a rate set by the government each year.

You should tell us in your period of leave notice(s) whether you intend to claim ShPP during your leave (and if applicable, for what period). If it is not in your period of leave notice you can tell us in writing, at least eight weeks before you want ShPP to start.

Other terms during shared parental leave

Your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during SPL, except for the terms relating to pay.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during SPL and can be carried over to the next holiday year where necessary as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we will make employer pension contributions during any period of paid SPL, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any shared parental pay you are receiving, unless you inform the Managing Director that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Keeping in touch

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your SPL although we will keep this to a minimum. This may include contacting you to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

You may ask or be asked to work (including attending training) on up to 20 "keeping-in-touch" days (KIT days) during your SPL. This is in addition to any KIT days that you may have taken during maternity leave. KIT days are not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with manager.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a KIT Day and this will be inclusive of any shared parental pay entitlement.

Returning to work

If you want to end a period of SPL early, you must give us eight weeks' written notice of the new return date. If you have already given us three period of leave notices you will not be able to end your SPL early without our agreement.

If you want to extend your SPL, assuming you still have unused SPL entitlement remaining, you must give us a written period of leave notice at least eight weeks before the date you were due to return to work. If you have already given us three period of leave notices you will not be able to extend your SPL without our agreement. You may instead be able to request annual leave or ordinary parental leave (see our Parental Leave Policy), subject to the needs of the business.

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You are normally entitled to return to work in the position you held before starting SPL, and on the same terms of employment. However, if it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return into the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable, but only in the following circumstances:

- if your SPL and any maternity or paternity leave you have taken adds up to more than 26 weeks in total (whether or not taken consecutively); or
- if you took SPL consecutively with more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave.

If you want to change your hours or other working arrangements on return from SPL, you should make a request under our Flexible Working Policy. It is helpful if such requests are made as early as possible.

If you decide you do not want to return to work, you should give notice of resignation in accordance with your contract.

Shared Parental Leave (Adoption and Surrogacy) Policy

This policy outlines the arrangements for shared parental leave (**SPL**) and pay for employees who are:

- Adopting a child through a UK adoption agency;
- Fostering a child with a view to possible adoption; or
- Becoming a parent through a surrogacy arrangement.

If you or your partner are pregnant or have given birth, please see the Shared Parental Leave (Birth) Policy instead.

This policy applies to employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

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

Frequently used terms

The definitions in this paragraph apply in this policy.

- **Partner:** your spouse, civil partner or someone living with you in an enduring family relationship at the time the child is placed for adoption, but not your sibling, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.
- **Parental Order:** a court order under section 54 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008, giving you and your partner parental responsibility for a child born to a surrogate.
- **Qualifying Week:** in a UK adoption case, the week the adoption agency notifies you that you have been matched with a child for adoption; in a surrogacy case, the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

What is shared parental leave?

SPL gives you and your partner more flexibility in how to share the care of your child in the first year after birth than simply taking maternity and paternity leave. Assuming you are both eligible, you will be able to choose how to split the available leave between you and can decide to be off work at the same time or at different times. You may be able to take leave in more than one block.

Entitlement

You may be entitled to SPL if:

- an adoption agency has placed a child with you and/or your partner for adoption; or
- a child is placed with you and/or your partner as foster parents under a "fostering for adoption" or "concurrent planning" scheme; or
- you have a child with a surrogate mother and the court has made or is expected to make a Parental Order.

You must intend to share the main responsibility for the care of the child with your partner.

The following conditions must be fulfilled:

- you must have at least 26 weeks continuous employment with us by the end of the Qualifying Week, and still be employed by us in the week before the leave is to be taken;

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- your partner must have worked (in an employed or self-employed capacity) in at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the Qualifying Week (or in a surrogacy case, the EWC) and had average weekly earnings of at least £30 during 13 of those weeks; and
- you and your partner must give the necessary statutory notices and declarations as summarised below, including notice to end adoption leave or statutory adoption pay (SAP).

Either you or your partner must qualify for statutory adoption leave and/or SAP and must take at least two weeks of adoption leave and/or pay.

If your partner is taking adoption leave and/or claiming SAP, you may be entitled to two weeks' paternity leave and pay (see our Paternity Leave Policy). You should consider using this before taking SPL. Paternity leave is additional to any SPL entitlement you may have, but you will lose any untaken paternity leave entitlement once you start a period of SPL.

The total amount of SPL available is 52 weeks, less the weeks of adoption leave taken by either you or your partner (or the weeks in which your partner has been in receipt of SAP if they were not entitled to adoption leave).

Opting in to shared parental leave and pay

Not less than eight weeks before the date you intend your SPL to start, you must give us a written opt-in notice which includes:

- your name and your partner's name;
- in a UK adoption case, the date the adoption agency notified you of a match, the expected date of placement, and the actual date of placement. If the child has not yet been placed with you, give the actual date of placement as soon as you can, before you take SPL;
- in a surrogacy case, the EWC, the actual date of birth, and the date of the Parental Order if it has already been made. If the child is not yet born give the date of birth as soon as you can, before you take SPL;
- if you are taking adoption leave, your adoption leave start and end dates;
- if you are not taking adoption leave, your partner's adoption leave start and end dates, or if your partner is not entitled to adoption leave, the start and end dates of their SAP;
- the total SPL available, which is 52 weeks minus the number of weeks' adoption leave or SAP taken or to be taken by you or your partner;
- how many weeks of the available SPL will be allocated to you and how many to your partner (you can change the allocation by giving us a further written notice, and you do not have to use your full allocation);
- if you are claiming statutory shared parental pay (ShPP), the total ShPP available, which is 39 weeks minus the number of weeks of SAP taken or to be taken);
- how many weeks of the available ShPP will be allocated to you and how many to your partner (you can change the allocation by giving us a further written notice, and you do not have to use your full allocation);
- an indication of the pattern of leave you are thinking of taking, including suggested start and end dates for each period of leave. This indication will not be binding at this stage, but please give as much information as you can about your future intentions; and
- declarations by you and your partner that you both meet the statutory conditions to enable you to take SPL and ShPP.

Ending your adoption leave

If you are taking or intend to take adoption leave and want to opt into the SPL scheme, you must give us at least eight weeks' written notice to end your adoption leave (a curtailment notice). The notice must state the date your adoption leave will end. You can give the notice before or after adoption leave starts, but you must take at least two weeks' adoption leave.

You must also give us, at the same time as the curtailment notice, a notice to opt into the SPL scheme or a written declaration that your partner has given their employer an opt-in notice and that you have given the necessary declarations in that notice.

If your partner is eligible to take SPL from their employer they cannot start it until you have given us your curtailment notice.

The curtailment notice is binding on you and cannot usually be revoked. You can only revoke a curtailment notice if your adoption leave has not yet ended and one of the following applies:

- if you realise that neither you nor your partner are in fact eligible for SPL or ShPP, in which case you can revoke the curtailment notice in writing up to eight weeks after it was given;
- if your partner has died.

Once you have revoked a curtailment notice you will be unable to opt back in to the SPL scheme.

Ending your partner's adoption leave or pay

If your partner is taking adoption leave or claiming SAP from their employer, you will only be able to take SPL once your partner has either:

- returned to work;
- given their employer a curtailment notice to end adoption leave; or
- given their employer a curtailment notice to end SAP (if they are entitled to SAP but not adoption leave).

Evidence of entitlement

You must provide on request:

- in an adoption case, one or more documents from the adoption agency showing the agency's name and address and the expected placement date;
- in a surrogacy case, the Parental Order from the court (if it has been granted); and
- The name and address of your partner's employer (or a declaration that they have no employer).

Booking your SPL dates

Having opted into the SPL system, you must book your leave by giving us a period of leave notice. This may be given at the same time as the opt-in notice or later, provided it is at least eight weeks before the start of SPL.

The period of leave notice can either give the dates you want to take SPL or, if the child has not yet been placed with you (or in a surrogacy case, if the child is not yet born), it can state the number of days after the placement that you want the SPL to start and end. This may be particularly useful if you intend to take paternity leave starting on the date of placement and wish to take SPL straight afterwards.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

If your period of leave notice gives dates for a single continuous block of SPL, you will be entitled to take the leave set out in the notice.

If your period of leave notice requests split periods of SPL, with periods of work in between, we will consider your request as set out below.

You can give up to three period of leave notices. This may enable you to take up to three separate blocks of SPL (although if you give a notice to vary or cancel a period of leave this will in most cases count as a further period of leave notice). In exceptional circumstances we may allow you to give more than three period of leave notices but there is no obligation for us to do so.

Procedure for requesting split periods of SPL

In general, a period of leave notice should set out a single continuous block of leave. We may be willing to consider a period of leave notice where the SPL is split into shorter periods with periods of work in between. It is best to discuss this with your manager and HR in good time before formally submitting your period of leave notice. This will give us more time to consider the request and hopefully agree a pattern of leave with you from the start.

If you want to request split periods of SPL, you must set out the requested pattern of leave in your period of leave notice. We will either agree to the request or start a two-week discussion period. At the end of that period, we will confirm any agreed arrangements in writing. If we have not reached agreement, you will be entitled to take the full amount of requested SPL as one continuous block, starting on the start date given in your notice (for example, if you requested three separate periods of four weeks each, they will be combined into one 12-week period of leave). Alternatively, you may:

- choose a new start date (which must be at least eight weeks after your original period of leave notice was given), and tell us within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period; or
- withdraw your period of leave notice within two days of the end of the two-week discussion period (in which case it will not be counted and you may submit a new one if you choose).

Changing the dates or cancelling your SPL

You can cancel a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the start date in the period of leave notice.

You can change the start date for a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the original start date and the new start date, whichever is earlier.

You can change the end date for a period of leave by notifying us in writing at least eight weeks before the original end date and the new end date, whichever is earlier.

You can combine discontinuous periods of leave into a single continuous period of leave. Since this will involve a change to the start date or end date of a period of leave, see paragraphs above which set out how much notice is required.

You can request that a continuous period of leave be split into two or more discontinuous periods of leave, with periods of work in between. Since this will involve a change to the start date or end date, see paragraphs above which set out how much notice is required for the request. We do not have to grant your request but will consider it as set out in the section above.

A notice to change or cancel a period of leave will count as one of your three period of leave notices, unless:

- the variation is a result of the child being placed with you earlier or later than the expected placement date;

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- you are cancelling a request for discontinuous leave within two days of the end of the two-week discussion period;
- the variation is at our request; or
- we agree otherwise.

Shared parental pay

You may be able to claim Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) of up to 39 weeks (less any weeks of SAP claimed by you or your partner) provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the Qualifying Week and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. ShPP is paid at a rate set by the government each year.

You should tell us in your period of leave notice(s) whether you intend to claim ShPP during your leave (and if applicable, for what period). If it is not in your period of leave notice you can tell us in writing, at least eight weeks before you want ShPP to start.

Other terms during shared parental leave

Your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during SPL, except for the terms relating to pay.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during SPL and can be carried over to the next holiday year where necessary as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, we will make employer pension contributions during any period of paid SPL, based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any shared parental pay you are receiving, unless you inform the Managing Director that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Keeping in touch

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your SPL although we will keep this to a minimum. This may include contacting you to discuss arrangements for your return to work.

You may ask or be asked to work (including attending training) on up to 20 "keeping-in-touch" days (KIT days) during your SPL. This is in addition to any KIT days that you may have taken during adoption leave. KIT days are not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with manager.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a KIT Day and this will be inclusive of any shared parental pay entitlement.

Returning to work

If you want to end a period of SPL early, you must give us eight weeks' written notice of the new return date. If you have already given us three period of leave notices you will not be able to end your SPL early without our agreement.

If you want to extend your SPL, assuming you still have unused SPL entitlement remaining, you must give us a written notice at least eight weeks before the date you were due to return to work. If you have already given us three period of leave notices you will not be able to extend your SPL without our agreement. You may instead be able to request annual leave or ordinary parental leave (see our Parental Leave Policy), subject to the needs of our business.

You are normally entitled to return to work in the position you held before starting SPL, and on the same terms of employment. However, if it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return

into the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable, but only in the following circumstances:

- if your SPL and any adoption or paternity leave you have taken adds up to more than 26 weeks in total (whether or not taken consecutively); or
- if you took SPL consecutively with more than four weeks of ordinary parental leave.

If you want to change your hours or other working arrangements on return from SPL, you should make a request under our Flexible Working Policy. It is helpful if such requests are made as early as possible.

If you decide you do not want to return to work, you should give notice of resignation in accordance with your contract.

Parental Leave Policy

This policy summarises the statutory right of employees to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave in respect of each child.

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

Entitlement to parental leave

To be eligible for parental leave, you must:

- have or expect to have responsibility for a child; and
- be taking the leave to spend time with or otherwise care for the child.

You have responsibility for a child if you are the biological or adoptive parent or have legal parental responsibility in some other way, for example under a court order.

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 18 weeks' parental leave in relation to each child.

You must tell us of any parental leave you have taken while working for another employer as this counts towards your 18-week entitlement

Taking parental leave

In most cases, parental leave can only be taken in blocks of a week or a whole number of weeks, and you may not take more than four weeks' parental leave a year in relation to each child. Parental leave can only be taken up to the child's 18th birthday.

Special rules apply where your child is disabled, which for these purposes means entitled to a disability living allowance, armed forces independence allowance or personal independence allowance. You can take parental leave in respect of that child in blocks of less than one week. However, there is still a limit of four weeks a year for each child and 18 weeks in total for each child.

Notification requirements

You must notify your line manager of your intention to take parental leave at least 21 days in advance. It would be helpful if you can give this notice in writing. Your notification should include the start and end dates of the requested period of leave.

If you wish to start parental leave immediately on the birth of a child, you must give notice at least 21 days before the expected week of childbirth.

If you wish to start parental leave immediately on having a child placed with you for adoption, you should give notice at least 21 days before the expected week of placement, or if this is not possible, give as much notice as you can.

Evidence of entitlement

We may ask to see evidence of:

- your responsibility or expected responsibility for the child such as birth certificate, adoption or matching certificate, parental responsibility agreement or court order;
- the child's date of birth or date of adoption placement.

Our right to postpone parental leave

Although we will try to accommodate your request for parental leave, we may postpone your requested leave where it would unduly disrupt our business (for example, if it would leave us short-staffed or unable to complete work on time).

We will discuss alternative dates with you and notify you in writing of the reason for postponement and the new start and end dates, within seven days of receiving your request for parental leave.

We cannot postpone parental leave if you have requested it to start immediately on the birth or adoption of a child.

We cannot postpone parental leave for more than six months, or beyond the child's 18th birthday (if sooner).

Terms and conditions during parental leave

Parental leave is unpaid. You will not be entitled to employer pension contributions in respect of the period of leave.

Your employment contract will remain in force, and holiday entitlement will continue to accrue. You will remain bound by your duties of good faith and confidentiality, and any contractual restrictions on accepting gifts and benefits, or working for another business.

Time off for Dependants Policy

The law recognises that there are occasions when you need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of your dependants.

This policy gives all employees the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain situations affecting their dependants.

No-one who takes time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment.

Depending on the circumstances you may also find it helpful to look at our Carer's Leave Policy, Neonatal Care Leave Policy, Parental Bereavement Leave Policy or Compassionate Leave Policy.

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

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

Reasonable unpaid time off

You have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when it is necessary to:

- provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant (such as a child-minder falling ill); and/or
- deal with an unexpected incident involving your child while a school or another educational establishment is responsible for them.

A dependant for the purposes of this policy is:

- your spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- a person who lives in the same household as you, but who is not your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in the paragraph above.

This policy applies to time off to take action which is necessary because of an immediate or unexpected crisis. This policy does not apply where you need to take planned time off or provide longer-term care for a dependant. If this is the case, you should take advice from your line manager.

Whether action is considered necessary will depend on the circumstances, including nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you and the dependant, and whether anyone else is available to assist. Action is unlikely to be considered necessary if you knew of a problem in advance but did not try to make alternative care arrangements.

Reasonable time off in relation to a particular problem will not normally be more than one or two days. However, we will always consider each set of circumstances on their facts.

Exercising the right to time off

You will only be entitled to time off under this policy if, as soon as is reasonably practicable, you tell your line manager:

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- the reason for your absence; and
- how long you expect to be away from work.

It may not be possible to confirm the reason for your absence until after you have returned to work (for example, if your absence is very brief) in which case you should still confirm the reason for your absence as soon as you return.

If you fail to notify us as set out above, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

We may in some cases ask you to provide evidence for your reasons for taking the time off, either in advance or on your return to work. Suspected abuse of this policy will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Carer's Leave Policy

The law recognises and we respect that there may be occasions when you will need to take time off work to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. The purpose of this policy is to set out the circumstances in which we will give employees unpaid time off work to deal with these situations. For time off for dependants to deal with unexpected events, please see our Time off for Dependants Policy.

No-one who takes time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

Time off

You have a right to take up to one week of unpaid time off work in each rolling 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

A dependant for the purposes of this policy is:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- a person who lives in the same household as you, but who is not your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide or arrange care for them.

A dependant has a long-term care need for the purposes of this policy if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010; or
- they require care for a reason connected with their old age.

Amount of time off

You may take a minimum of half a working day's leave under this policy and up to a maximum of one week's leave. You do not need to take the days consecutively, provided that you take no more than the equivalent of one working week's leave in each rolling 12-month period.

If the amount of time you work varies from week to week, a week's leave will be an average of a week's work:

- If you have been employed for at least a year, this will be calculated by dividing the total of the periods for which you were normally required to work during the course of a week in the previous 12 months by 52.
- If you have been employed for less than a year, this will be calculated by dividing the total of the periods for which you were normally required to work during the course of a week by the number of weeks you have been employed.

Exercising the right to time off

To take leave under this policy you must give to your line manager the longer of: three days' notice or twice as many days' notice as the number of days you want to take off.

The notice must:

- specify that you are entitled to take carer's leave in accordance with this policy; and
- specify the days you intend to take carer's leave and if you will take a full or a half day.

If you fail to notify us as set out above, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

In some circumstances, where the operation of the business would be disrupted if you took leave, we may need to postpone your carer's leave. If we do this, we will allow you to take the same amount of leave you have requested at a mutually convenient time within one month of the first day you requested to take leave under this policy. If this happens, we will write to you within seven days of your request to take leave, setting out the reason for the postponement and the days we have agreed you can take carer's leave.

If you take carer's leave and any other statutory leave (for example, maternity or adoption leave) consecutively, carer's leave does not count when calculating the period of time, you have been away from work in respect of your right to return to the job in which you were previously engaged.

Neonatal Care Leave Policy

About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the arrangements for neonatal care leave (NCL), which is intended to help employees whose child requires specialist neonatal care after birth.

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Definition of neonatal care

Neonatal care is medical care of a child that starts within 28 days of birth. This covers:

- Any hospital treatment, including outpatient treatment.
- Treatment in a maternity home or clinic.
- Ongoing monitoring and home visits from healthcare professionals directed by a consultant and arranged by the hospital where the child was an inpatient.
- Palliative or end of life care. (For further information on neonatal loss, see our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.)

Entitlement to NCL

NCL is available after your child has received neonatal care for an uninterrupted period of seven days, not counting the day the neonatal care starts. Each uninterrupted week of neonatal care is a qualifying week. Part weeks are not counted.

In an adoption, a qualifying week only includes time spent in neonatal care after the date the child was placed with you or, in an overseas adoption, after the date the child entered Great Britain.

You are entitled to one week of NCL for each qualifying week of neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

Eligibility for NCL

You may be eligible for NCL if you are the child's biological parent, intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement, or their adopter or prospective adopter through a UK adoption agency or via an overseas adoption, and you have (or expect to have) responsibility for the child's upbringing.

You may also be eligible if, at the date of the child's birth, placement for adoption, or entry into Great Britain for adoption (as applicable), you are the cohabiting partner of the child's parent, intended parent, adopter or prospective adopter, and you share (or expect to share) with them the main responsibility for the child's upbringing.

Taking NCL

NCL cannot be taken during the first week of neonatal care (waiting period). You may already be on maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave during the waiting period. If not, talk to your manager if you need time off, which may be available as paid holiday or unpaid time off for dependents (see our Time Off for Dependents Policy).

NCL can be taken any time after the waiting period, up to 68 weeks after your child's date of birth.

The rules for taking NCL depend on whether NCL is taken in a Tier 1 period or a Tier 2 period. The rules are more flexible during a Tier 1 period.

The Tier 1 period starts the day after the waiting period and lasts until seven days after neonatal care has ended. If you want to start NCL during a Tier 1 period:

- Notify your manager on or before the day you want to start NCL. Same-day notice should be given before the time you are due to start work. If you have already started work, NCL will start the next day. You may be able to take the rest of the day off under our Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- You must tell your manager your child's date of birth, the date neonatal care started and, if it has ended, the date it ended. You must give all the information required below in writing within 28 days of the start of NCL.
- You can take NCL in one continuous period or multiple periods of one or more whole weeks.
- Where you intend to remain on NCL for more than one week, notify your manager as soon as possible and by the start of each new week of NCL.

The Tier 2 period lasts from the end of the Tier 1 period until 68 weeks after the date of birth. If you want to start NCL during a Tier 2 period:

- You must give 15 days' notice to take one week of NCL or 28 days' notice to take two or more weeks of NCL.
- The notice must be in writing and must contain the information set out below.
- NCL must be taken as one continuous period of a whole number of weeks.

If, after your child is discharged from neonatal care, they start to receive neonatal care again within the first 28 days after birth for a further qualifying week or more, the Tier 1 period resumes until seven days after the neonatal care ends.

Where neonatal care is ongoing when you give the notice required above, notify your line manager when the neonatal care ends. If your child starts to receive neonatal care again, notify your line manager of the start and end dates of the further period of neonatal care as soon as possible.

Written information required

You must provide the following information in writing:

- Your name.
- Your child's date of birth.
- In a UK adoption, the date of placement, or in an overseas adoption, the date your child entered Great Britain.
- The start and end dates (if known) of any period(s) of neonatal care.
- The date the NCL started or will start.
- The number of weeks of NCL you intend to take or have taken.
- A declaration that the purpose of the NCL is to care for your child.
- If it is the first notice in respect of your child, a declaration that you meet the eligibility requirements set out above.

Cancelling NCL in Tier 2 period

You can cancel a planned period of NCL that is due to start in a Tier 2 period by telling us at least 15 days before the leave starts (for a single week of NCL) or 28 days before the leave starts (for two or more consecutive weeks of NCL).

Neonatal care pay

You qualify for statutory neonatal care pay (SNCP) during NCL if you have already qualified for statutory maternity pay (SMP), statutory paternity pay (SPP) or statutory adoption pay (SAP) in respect of your child.

If you have not qualified for SMP, SPP or SAP, you can still qualify for SNCP if your average earnings are at least the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year and you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week before the neonatal care starts.

SNCP is only payable in respect of whole weeks of NCL, at the same rate as statutory paternity pay. The rate is set by the government each tax year.

All employees are entitled to full pay during the first week of NCL. This includes any SNCP that may be payable for that week.

Interaction of NCL with other family leave

Taking NCL does not affect your entitlement to other family leave and pay, such as:

- Maternity leave and pay (see our Maternity Leave Policy).
- Adoption leave and pay (see our Adoption Leave Policy).
- Paternity leave and pay (see our Paternity Leave Policy).
- Shared parental leave and pay (see our Shared Parental Leave Policy).
- Parental leave (see our Parental Leave Policy).

If you are taking maternity, adoption, paternity, parental or shared parental leave at the time your child starts to receive neonatal care, you can take your NCL after that leave ends. You must give the relevant period of notice and written information set out above.

If your NCL is interrupted by the start of another pre-booked period of statutory family leave (such as paternity leave, parental leave or shared parental leave), then the interrupted NCL period resumes immediately after the other leave if you are still in the Tier 1 period (that is, if neonatal care is ongoing or has ended within the last week). If you are then in a Tier 2 period (that is, the neonatal care ended more than a week ago), the remainder of the interrupted NCL must be added onto any further period of NCL you are intending to take. Alternatively, if we agree, you may delay the start of the other leave until immediately after the end of your NCL.

When booking a period of NCL in the Tier 2 period, you must ensure it will not be interrupted by the start of another period of family leave that you have booked.

For information about time off and other support for neonatal loss, see our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.

Compassionate Leave Policy

Compassionate leave is designed to help you deal with traumatic personal circumstances such as the death of a close relative or where a close relative has a life-threatening illness or injury.

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.

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

When compassionate leave may be available

Subject to the paragraph below, you may take unpaid compassionate leave of up to one week in any 12-month period where a close relative and up to one day where a distant relative or close friend has died, is critically ill with a life-threatening illness, or has suffered a life-threatening injury.

Close relative means a spouse or partner, child, step-child, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, step-sibling, or sibling-in-law.

In the event of the death of a child under the age of 18, including a stillbirth, please see our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy which applies instead of this policy. We may grant further compassionate leave in this situation at our discretion.

We will consider requests for compassionate leave due to other traumatic events, such as the death of a close friend, or difficult personal circumstances on a case-by-case basis. In either situation, we may, in addition to another type of leave, grant compassionate leave at our discretion.

If you are still unable to return to work following compassionate leave you should contact your line manager. We may at our discretion grant you further unpaid compassionate leave in those circumstances. Alternatively, you may be able to take a period of annual leave, subject to your manager's approval.

If you need longer term changes to your working arrangements, please talk with your manager in the first instance and consider making a request under our Flexible Working Policy.

Requesting compassionate leave

We recognise that it may not always be possible to request compassionate leave in advance. However, where it is possible, you should make a request to your line manager. You should tell them the reasons for your request and the number of days leave you would like to take.

Where it is not possible to request leave in advance you should contact your line manager as soon as possible to tell them the reason for your absence and the number of days you expect to be absent. Someone can do this on your behalf if necessary.

In exceptional circumstances we may have to refuse a request for compassionate leave and will give you a written explanation of the reasons. If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you may make a complaint under our Grievance Procedure.

Parental Bereavement Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements for parental bereavement leave, which is a type of compassionate leave intended to help employees deal with the death of a child or a stillbirth after at least 24 weeks of pregnancy.

For compassionate leave in other circumstances please see our Compassionate Leave Policy.

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

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

Entitlement to parental bereavement leave

You are entitled to parental bereavement leave if a child has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy and you or your partner:

- are their parent or foster parent;
- have had the child placed with you for adoption (whether by a UK adoption agency or from overseas);
- are their intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement;
- are the natural parent of a child who has since been adopted by someone else, and there is a court order allowing you or your partner to have contact with the child; or
- look after the child in your own home, other than as a paid carer, and have done so for at least four weeks (a parent "in fact").

How long is parental bereavement leave?

Parental bereavement leave can be one week, two consecutive weeks, or two separate weeks. It can be taken at any time during the first 56 weeks after the child's death.

Further unpaid compassionate leave may be available under our Compassionate Leave Policy at our discretion. Please speak to your manager if you require further time off in addition to parental bereavement leave.

Parental bereavement pay

You may qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay (SPBP) during parental bereavement leave if:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending on the Saturday before the child died; and
- you earn at least the lower earnings limit for class 1 national insurance contributions.

SPBP is only payable in respect of whole weeks of leave, at the same rate as statutory paternity pay. The rate is set by the government each tax year.

You will qualify for full pay during the first week of parental bereavement leave. This includes any statutory parental bereavement pay that may be payable for that week.

For salaried employees, full pay is based on your basic pay. For hourly-paid employees, it is based on an average over a two-month period.

Leave in the first eight weeks

In the first eight weeks after a child has died, there is no need to give advance notice to take parental bereavement leave. Please notify your line manager as soon as you can on the day you want your leave to start, preferably before the time you would normally start work, where possible. Someone can do this on your behalf if necessary.

If you have already started work, then your parental bereavement leave period will start on the following day. We would usually allow you to take the rest of the day off as compassionate leave.

You can cancel any planned parental bereavement leave in the first eight weeks by telling us at any time before the leave starts, and no later than the time you would normally start work on the first day of the leave period. You cannot cancel leave once it has started.

Leave after more than eight weeks

To take parental bereavement leave more than eight weeks after the child has died, please give your line manager at least a week's written notice.

Parental bereavement leave can be cancelled with a week's written notice, and can be re-booked by giving a week's written notice.

Written confirmation

We will ask you to confirm the following information in writing within 28 days of starting any period of parental bereavement leave:

- your name;
- the date the child died or was stillborn;
- the dates of paid or unpaid parental bereavement leave taken; and
- your relationship to the child.

Stillbirths, neonatal deaths, adoptions and surrogacy

Entitlement to maternity leave and pay (see our Maternity Leave Policy) is not affected if your child has died or been stillborn. You can take maternity leave in addition to parental bereavement leave.

You may be entitled to adoption leave and pay as a result of a child being placed with you for adoption, or because you are an intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement (see our Adoption Leave Policy). If the child has died or been stillborn, adoption leave entitlement runs for another eight weeks from the end of the week in which the child died (unless it would already have ended sooner). This is in addition to your right to parental bereavement leave.

You may be entitled to paternity leave and pay as a result of the birth of a child (including a birth to a surrogate mother), or the placement of a child with you for adoption (see our Paternity Leave Policy). If your child has died or been stillborn, you can take paternity leave in addition to parental bereavement leave. However, if you have not notified us of your chosen paternity leave dates before the death or stillbirth of your child, you must take your paternity leave within the next eight weeks.

If your child has received at least seven full days of neonatal care you may also be entitled to neonatal care leave and pay. Please see our Neonatal Care Leave Policy.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Policy

About this policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the arrangements for bereaved partner's paternity leave (BPPL), which is a type of leave intended to help employees deal with the death of a partner who is the primary carer for their child, either during the first 52 weeks after the child's birth, or the first 52 weeks after their placement for adoption. For compassionate leave in other circumstances, please see our Compassionate Leave Policy.

Where you have sufficient length of service, and your partner was in paid work before the birth or adoption placement, you may be eligible for shared parental leave and pay under our Shared Parental Leave Policy. This is likely to be more beneficial than BPPL.

This policy applies to employees only. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors, volunteers or interns.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Eligibility for BPPL

You are entitled to BPPL if:

- a child's primary carer has died within 52 weeks of the child's birth or the date the child was placed for adoption;
- you are either the child's father or the partner of the child's primary carer; and
- you are taking leave to care for the child.

The primary carer means either:

- the child's mother.
- in an adoption case, a person with whom the child has been placed for adoption (and if the child was placed jointly with you, the person who you have jointly chosen to be entitled to adoption leave).
- in a surrogacy case, the person who is the intended parent (and in a case where you are both intended parents, the person who you have jointly chosen to be entitled to adoption leave).

Length of BPPL

BPPL is a single period of leave that can start at any time after the bereavement and can last up to 52 weeks after the date of birth or adoption placement.

If the bereavement takes place in the last two weeks of that 52-week period, you can take BPPL for up to two weeks after the bereavement.

Starting BPPL within eight weeks of bereavement

To start BPPL in the first eight weeks after the bereavement, please tell your line manager as soon as possible, but in any event before you are due to start work on the first day of BPPL.

You must then provide the information set out below, no more than eight weeks after the bereavement, and at least one week before your return to work (whichever is earlier).

You can change the start date for BPPL in the first eight weeks if you notify us before the old or new start date, whichever is earlier.

BPPL can be cancelled if you tell us at any time before the start date, and can be re-booked by giving notice above or, if you wish to start BPPL more than eight weeks after the bereavement, a week's written notice is required below.

Starting BPPL more than eight weeks after bereavement

To start BPPL more than eight weeks after the bereavement, please give your line manager at least a week's written notice, including all the information set out below.

BPPL can be cancelled with a week's written notice, and can be re-booked by giving a week's written notice.

Written notice

The information required in writing above is as follows:

- the date of bereavement;
- the child's date of birth or placement for adoption;
- the date you started BPPL;
- the date you intend to return to work; and
- confirmation that you meet the eligibility conditions above.

Pay

If you are entitled to statutory paternity pay (SPP) and have not yet received it, you may claim it during your BPPL. SPP is payable for a maximum of two weeks at a rate set by the government each tax year.

Terms and conditions during BPPL

With the exception of terms relating to pay, your terms and conditions of employment remain in force during BPPL.

Holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during BPPL and can be carried over to the next holiday year as set out in our Holidays Policy.

If you are a member of the workplace pension scheme, we shall make employer pension contributions during any period of paid BPPL **OR** SPP based on your normal salary, in accordance with the pension scheme rules. Any employee contributions you make will be based on the amount of any pay you are receiving, unless you inform your line manager that you wish to make up any shortfall.

Keeping in touch

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your BPPL.

You may ask or be asked to work (including attending training) for up to ten "keeping-in-touch" days (KIT days) during your BPPL. This is not compulsory and must be discussed and agreed with your line manager.

You will be paid at your normal basic rate of pay for time spent working on a KIT day.

Changing your return-to-work date

If you want to change the date you intend to return to work, you must let us know in writing as follows:

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- if your old return date was eight weeks or less after the bereavement, please give one week's notice before the earlier of the old or new return date.
- if your old return date was more than eight weeks after the bereavement, please give eight weeks' notice before the earlier of the old or new return date.

Your return to work date cannot be later than 52 weeks after the date of birth or placement for adoption. If you need more time off, you may request holiday or parental leave.