



# Paternity leave

Human Resources

April 2026

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# Document History

Name of policy	Paternity leave
Purpose of policy	To set out the entitlements of employees to paternity leave to allow them to spend time with a new child and support their partner.
Policy applies to	All employees
Latest update	April 2026
Update overview	<p>April 2024: Policy review to reflect the Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024. This entitles employees to split their leave into two separate one week blocks within 52 weeks of the child's birth, placement for adoption or entry into the UK.</p> <p><u><a href="#">April 2026: The Employment Rights Act 2025 removes the 26 weeks service qualifying period of employment for paternity leave, making it a day one right.</a></u></p>

## Paternity leave

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

This policy sets out the entitlements of employees to paternity leave to allow them to spend time with a new child and support their partner.

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Adopter" means the person with whom the child has been or is to be placed for adoption, or where two people have been matched jointly, whoever has elected to be the child's adopter for the purposes of adoption leave.

"Expected week of childbirth" means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the baby is due to be born.

"Matched for adoption" means an adoption agency deciding that a person would be a suitable adoptive parent for a child either individually or jointly with another person. A person

is notified of having been "matched for adoption" with a child on the date on which the person receives notification of the adoption agency's decision.

"Official notification" means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant domestic authority, that it is prepared to issue, or has already issued, a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of the child, confirming that the adopter is eligible to adopt and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

"Partner" includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother, expectant mother or adopter of the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the mother's or adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Placed for adoption" means placed for adoption under UK adoption laws, including placement with a local authority foster parent who is also a prospective adopter ("foster to adopt").

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we can amend it at any time. This may be in response to changing UK legislation or to ensure it remains supportive for our workforce.

## 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

## 2. Paternity leave

### 2.1 Entitlement to paternity leave

You can take paternity leave for the purpose of caring for the child and supporting the child's mother if:

- You ~~must~~ have or expect to have responsibility for bringing up the child; and
- You are ~~be one or both of the following~~: the child's father; married to, the civil partner or partner of the mother or birth parent (this includes same-sex partners).

If you have separated from your partner but have ongoing responsibility for your child, you remain entitled to paternity leave and pay.

~~You must have 26 weeks continuous service for at least 26 weeks up to the 'qualify week' (15th week before the expected week of childbirth).~~

In adoption, this means 26 weeks continuous service at the end of the week in which the

child's adopter is notified of being matched for adoption (or received official notification of adoption from overseas). ~~You will also~~ be the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the child's adopter, and have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from the adopter) for the child's upbringing.

## **2.2 Amount of paternity leave you can take**

You can take up to 1 or 2 weeks' paternity leave. The leave can be 2 weeks together or two separate blocks of one week.

You can take only two weeks' paternity leave per pregnancy or adoption, even if more than one child is born because of the pregnancy or more than one child is placed under the same adoption arrangement.

## **2.3 Timing of paternity leave**

You can start your paternity leave on any day from the child's birth, but it must end within 52 weeks of the birth.

In the case of an adopted child, the 52-week period runs from the date on which the child was placed for adoption with the adopter (or the child's entry into the UK for adoptions from overseas).

If you wish to take shared parental leave, you must take your paternity leave first. You cannot take paternity leave if you have already taken a period of shared parental leave in relation to the same child.

## **2.2 Telling us you will be going on paternity leave**

To take paternity leave, you need to tell your line manager by email or in writing by the end of the qualifying week (the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the child is expected to be born), or as soon as possible afterwards that:

- You're having a baby
- The date of the week the baby is due
- Confirm your eligibility for paternity leave

We will also need to see the MAT B1 form which is provided after 20 weeks' pregnant.

You and your manager can start planning for your paternity leave and discussing your initial intentions for when and how much paternity leave you intend to take.

At least 28 days before starting your leave (or each period of leave if you intend to take two

separate blocks) you must tell us the dates of your intended leave. Talk to your line manager and use the **starting paternity leave** form to do this. Payroll will write to you confirming the dates of your paternity leave.

If you want to change the start date of your paternity leave, you should give us 28 days notice wherever possible. If the baby is born late, tell us the new date you are starting your paternity leave as soon as you can.

If you are adopting within the UK talk to your line manager about the process if you feel comfortable, this will help us to support you best and help plan your paternity leave. You need to tell us within 7 days you have been matched with a child and when the placement is expected to start (or started if its already happened). If you are adopting from overseas you must tell us within 28 days of receiving the official notification of adoption, including the date the child is expected to enter the UK, or if they already have, when this was.

## 3. Paternity Pay

### 3.1 Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)

You will qualify for SPP if you have 26 weeks continuous service before the qualifying week, or in adoption, the week you are notified of being matched for adoption. Your average weekly earnings in the 8 weeks up to and including your qualifying or matching week must be at least equal to the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance contributions.

SPP is paid for 2 weeks and only payable when you are absent from work on paternity leave. You will be paid in the same way as your normal salary would have been. You get the same amount of paternity pay even if you have more than one baby, for example twins.

### 3.2 Maternity Support Leave Pay

This allows for 5 days with pay to be granted to the child's father, the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother at, or around, the time of the birth. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother as their primary provider of support at, or around, the time of birth. This means that your first week of paternity leave will be your normal pay ~~(which will include SPP)~~. If you choose to take a second week and qualify for SPP, you will be paid the SPP current rate.

## 4. Supporting the pregnancy

### Attending appointments

If you qualify for paternity leave, you are able to time paid off work to attend two pregnancy related or adoption appointments. This includes pregnancy appointments with a surrogate.

Give us as much notice as you can of the appointments and wherever possible try to arrange them near the start/end of your working day. We expect that normally no more than half a day is needed for an antenatal appointment, the leave does include travel to and from it.

## 5. Bereavement during pregnancy

### 8.1 Miscarriage

If your partner has a miscarriage before 24 weeks, you're not entitled to paternity leave and pay.

You do not have to tell us you've about it. However, we encourage you to do so and communicate as openly as possible with your line manager so that we can talk about the right support for you. You can also find help and support from the [Miscarriage Association](#).

### 8.2 Supporting you if your baby is still born or your baby dies

You remain entitled to paternity leave and pay if your baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or your baby only lives for a short time after birth at any stage of pregnancy.

Talk to us as soon as you can about what's happened. Someone else can do this, a friend or a family member, if you need them to. We will talk to you about the right support for you and will be led by you when having conversations about your health and leave.

You can find help and support following the death of your baby before, during or shortly after their birth from: [Child Bereavement UK](#) and [Sands](#)

### 8.3 If your adoption doesn't go ahead

If your adoption doesn't go ahead, this may happen if the child is returned to the adoption agency or foster care or has died, you remain entitled to paternity leave and pay.

Talk to us as soon as you can about what's happened. Someone else can do this, a friend or a family member, if you need them to. We will talk to you about the right support for you and will be led by you when having conversations about your health and leave.

### 8.4 Employee Support Line

The employee support line is available to us all for emotional and practical support to help us

manage and reduce the impact of life's events. Its available 24/7 and is free and confidential.

You can read more about it here: [Employee Support Line](#)

They are available on 0800 116 387 or online on [www.my-eap.com](http://www.my-eap.com) login: newforestwell