

MATERNITY & ADOPTION, PATERNITY & SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

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MATERNITY & ADOPTION LEAVE

1) INTRODUCTION

As an Equal Opportunities Employer, the Association wishes to promote continuity of employment for working parents, recognising that the enhanced maternity pay and conditions are an effective way of retaining qualified and experienced staff.

Employer's Liability in respect of maternity pay, maternity leave, and the right to return to work are contained in the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Employment Relations Act 1999, Employment Act 2002, and the Work and Families Act 2006. Shared Parental Leave arrangements are covered in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Nothing in the following conditions shall be construed as proving rights less favourable than in the legislation.

2) ENTITLEMENT TO MATERNITY OR ADOPTION LEAVE

If an employee is pregnant or has recently given birth, she is entitled to Maternity Leave.

If an employee adopts a child, either they or their partner will be entitled to Adoption Leave. Adoption leave can be taken by either partner adopting a child jointly, regardless of gender. To obtain the benefit of these rights, employees must comply with the qualifying conditions that are outlined below.

Where employees meet the eligibility criteria, they are entitled to 52 weeks' Maternity or Adoption Leave, in order to care for a new baby or a newly adopted child who is up to 18 years of age.

Maternity and Adoption Leave is made up of 26 weeks' Ordinary Leave, followed by 26 weeks' Additional Leave. Additional Maternity Leave (AML) or Additional Adoption Leave (AAL) follows immediately after the end of the Ordinary Leave. There can be no gap between the two types of leave. New mothers and adoptive parents have the right to transfer all, or part, of their AML or AAL entitlement to the other parent.

Women are legally obliged to take a minimum of 2 weeks maternity leave after giving birth; this is called Compulsory Maternity leave.

The Association will allow the employee paid time-off to attend ante-natal care appointments.

3) NOTIFYING THE ASSOCIATION OF INTENTION TO TAKE MATERNITY LEAVE

No later than the end of the 15th week before the week the child is due, the employee must give her employer written notice of:

- The fact that she is pregnant or has been matched with a child for adoption.
- Her expected date of childbirth, which must be confirmed with the medical certificate MATB1 or notification of the adoption and the date on which she intends to start her maternity or adoption leave.

Within 28 calendar days of the employee giving notice, the Association will respond in writing to the employee, confirming the date when the maternity leave will end. This will normally be 52 weeks' from the start of maternity or adoption leave.

Although the minimum notice from an employee is as above, it would be appreciated by the Association if more notice can be given.

The earliest an employee may start her Maternity Leave is 11 weeks before her expected week of childbirth. However, the Maternity Leave will start automatically if she gives birth before this date.

An employee's Maternity Leave will automatically start if she is absent from work for a pregnancy-related illness during the four weeks before her expected week of childbirth.

An employee may change her mind about when she wants to start her Maternity Leave, as long as she notifies the Association, in writing, of her new start date. She must give the Association the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods:

- 28 days before the date on which the employee originally intended to start her leave.
- OR
- 28 days before the new date on which the employee wants to start her leave.

4) NOTIFYING THE ASSOCIATION OF INTENTION TO TAKE ADOPTION LEAVE

If an employee adopts a child, they are entitled to Adoption Leave. This right applies to both men and women.

The partner of an individual who adopts, or the other partner of a couple adopting a child jointly, may also be entitled to Paternity Leave and Statutory Paternity Pay.

If an employee is part of a couple that adopts a child, they can choose which partner will take Adoption Leave and which will take Paternity Leave. Either partner can choose the type of leave that applies to them.

To qualify for Adoption Leave, an employee must:

- Be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency.
- Have notified the agency that they agree that the child should be placed with them and have agreed the date of placement.
- Have worked continuously for the Association for 26 weeks ending with the week in which they are notified of being newly matched with a child by the agency.
- Notify the Association of when they want to take Adoption Leave no more than seven calendar days after being notified that they have been matched with a child.

An employee should also give the Association the matching certificate from the approved adoption agency as evidence of their entitlement to adoption leave. Only one period of adoption leave will be available, irrespective of whether an employee has more than one child placed with them for adoption as part of the same arrangement.

Within 28 calendar days of the employee giving notice, the Association will respond in writing to the employee, confirming the date when the adoption leave will end. This will normally be 52 weeks' from the start of maternity or adoption leave.

Although the minimum notice from an employee is as above, it would be appreciated by the Association if more notice can be given.

An employee may choose to start their adoption leave either from:

- The date of the child's placement.
- OR
- A fixed date, which can be up to 14 calendar days before the expected date of the child's placement.

An employee may change their mind about when they want to start their adoption leave, as long as they notify the Association, in writing, of the new start date. An employee must give the Association the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods:

- 28 days before the date on which they originally intended to start their leave.
- OR
- 28 days before the new date on which they want to start their leave.

5) **NOTIFICATION OF RETURN TO WORK**

The employee does not need to give notice of her return to work if she simply returns at the end of her 52 week maternity or adoption leave period.

If the employee wishes to return to work before her full entitlement to maternity or adoption leave has ended, she must give her employer a minimum of 8 weeks' notice of the date of her earlier return.

If the employee fails to give the required 8 weeks' notice of an earlier return to work, the employer may postpone the employee's return until the end of the 8 weeks' notice she should have given, or until the end of her maternity or adoption leave period, whichever is earlier.

The employee may change her mind about the date of her return, but she must always give the employer at least 8 weeks' notice of any changes.

An employee does not lose the right to return to work if she does not follow the correct notification requirements. However, the employer may take appropriate disciplinary action if she fails to return to work at the end of her maternity or adoption leave period. If the employee is unable to return to work because of ill health at the end of her leave, the employer's normal sickness rules, procedures and payments will apply.

6) MATERNITY OR ADOPTION PAY

Maternity or adoption pay is payable for a total period of 39 weeks.

If eligible to Statutory Maternity or Adoption Pay the following will be paid:

- a) 6 weeks x full pay (includes statutory payments).
- b) 12 weeks x half pay plus statutory payments.
- c) 6 weeks x half pay (includes statutory payments).
- d) 15 weeks at statutory rates.

The final 13 weeks is unpaid.

Pay will be made on normal pay days.

A week's pay is the amount payable to the employee under current contract of employment if the employee works throughout her normal working hours in a week.

Maternity or adoption pay will be itemised separately on salary slips.

The Statutory Pay Period starts at the beginning of the Maternity or Adoption Leave.

Pension contributions at full-pay rates will be paid by the Association throughout the period of maternity or adoption leave. The employee's contributions shall not be collected during any period of unpaid maternity or adoption leave, nor shall they be deducted at a later date.

Professional fees shall continue to be paid, at the full rate, by the Association during the maternity or adoption leave period.

Union dues at the reduced rate will continue to be deducted for the whole period of maternity or adoption leave from the employee's wages. To be classed as eligible for the reduced rate, the Association must provide written confirmation of the employee's expected date of childbirth and the date of her stopping work. This will be forwarded to the TU and is the responsibility of the employee.

7) THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO WORK

If an employee returns during or after the 26 weeks' of ordinary maternity or adoption leave they have the right to return to the exact role they had before commencing their maternity leave. If the employee returns at any time during or at the end of additional maternity or adoption leave the Association can place the employee into a role with no less favourable terms and conditions if it has not been reasonable, and practical, to keep the previous role open.

The Management Committee may postpone her return to work for up to 8 weeks' from the proposed date by notifying her, giving reasons, before that date.

8) ANNUAL LEAVE

During both ordinary and additional maternity and adoption leave, employees are entitled to the benefit of, and bound by, all the terms and conditions of employment that would have applied but for their absence, except for terms and conditions regarding remuneration.

9) GENERAL CONDITIONS

The employee on maternity or adoption leave is still a member of staff, therefore, she should receive items on circulation to the general staff, and be able to attend staff training days if she so wishes.

During maternity or adoption leave, employees are entitled to the benefit of, and bound by, all the terms and conditions of employment that would have applied but for their absence, except for terms and conditions regarding remuneration.

10) TRAINING

An employee who has commenced or has approval to commence a training course should not have this situation altered by pregnancy or maternity leave.

If the employee does not wish, or is unable to continue a course, she should have the right to withdraw without repaying any fees.

If any employee on unpaid maternity leave is attending a course she is entitled to pro-rata payment for her time of attendance.

11) KEEPING IN TOUCH DAYS

An employee may carry out up to 10 days work for the Association during her statutory maternity or adoption leave period without bringing her

maternity or adoption leave to an end. This is to allow an employee to keep in touch with the workplace. Keeping in Touch Days must be mutually agreed. Neither the employee nor the Association is under any obligation to take part in Keeping in Touch days.

PATERNITY LEAVE

1) ENTITLEMENT TO ORDINARY PATERNITY LEAVE (OPL)

Employees can take Paternity Leave in relation to the birth or adoption of a child. If the employee is the partner of an individual who adopts, or they are the other member of a couple who is adopting jointly, they may be entitled to Paternity Leave.

If an employee adopts a child, they can choose who will take the Adoption Leave and who will take the Paternity Leave. Only one period of Maternity or Adoption Leave and one period of Paternity Leave may be taken between the couple even if the employee's partner works for a different company.

If an employee meets the qualifying conditions, they will be entitled to Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL).

In order to qualify for Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL) the employee must:

- Have worked continuously for the Association for 26 weeks' leading into the 15th week before the child is due; or by the week in which an approved adoption agency matches the employee with the child (the notification week).
- Be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner (male or female) or have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- Confirm the requested leave is intended for the purpose of caring for the child, or to support the child's mother or adoptive parent in caring for the child.

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 2 weeks' paid OPL. OPL must be taken in units of either one whole week or 2 consecutive whole weeks. Leave may start on any day of the week, on or following the child's birth, but must be completed:

- Within 56 calendar days of the actual date of birth of the child; or
- If the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 calendar days after the expected week of birth.

An employee may change their mind about the start date for OPL, providing they tell the Association at least 28 calendar days in advance of the changed start date (or as soon as is reasonably practicable, if not in a position to do so within the prescribed period).

2) REQUESTING ORDINARY PATERNITY LEAVE

If you wish to take OPL you must notify the Association by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, stating the week the child is due, or the date of being matched with a child, whether you wish to take one week or 2 weeks' continuous leave; and the date you want the leave to start.

The Association will consider all requests for Paternity Leave. However, you must be aware that Ordinary Paternity Leave can only be authorised to be taken immediately after the birth or the placement of the child or if later at a time to suit the needs of the business.

3) REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Where the mother or adopter of the child satisfies the conditions for Maternity or Adoption Leave, an employee will need to provide the following documentation:

- **Mother or adopter declaration**

The mother or adopter must provide a written declaration stating their name and address, the date they intend to return to work after their maternity or Adoption Leave, their National Insurance number, confirmation that the employee is the only person exercising the entitlement to take APL in respect of the child and that they consent to the Association processing the information contained in the declaration.

- **Employee declaration**

An employee must provide the Association with a written request to take Paternity Leave. The employee must specify the expected week of child birth, or the date of the child's birth or the date the child was matched. The request must also specify the start and end date of the intended leave and state that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child.

The employee will also be required to provide a copy of the child's birth certificate or the relevant documents issued by the approved adoption agency, the name and address of the adoption agency and the name and address of the mother's employer.

4) RETURNING TO WORK AFTER YOUR PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees are normally entitled to return to work following Ordinary Paternity Leave to the same position they held before commencing their leave. The employee's terms of employment will continue to be the same as they would have been had they not been on Paternity Leave.

If an employee is unable to return to work following a period of Paternity Leave due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and the normal reporting procedures will apply.

5) ORDINARY STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY

Eligible employees are entitled to be paid during their OPL following the birth or placement of their child in order to care for the child or support the mother or adoptive parent.

During OPL, most employees will be entitled to Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay (OSPP), which will be the same as the standard rate of

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). In order to qualify for OSPP an employee must:

- Meet the OPL qualifying conditions mentioned above
- Have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes over the 8 week period leading up to and including, the 15th week before the child is due or, in adoption cases, the Notification Week.

In addition to meeting the conditions detailed above, the Association may request an employee to provide a self-certificate as evidence that the mother or adoptive parent meets these conditions. The self-certificate must also provide the information required above and include a declaration that you meet the necessary conditions.

6) GENERAL CONDITIONS

Employees are entitled to enjoy their normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of pay, whilst on Paternity Leave. Employees are also entitled to return to the same job following their leave.

7) POLICY REVIEW

The Maternity & Adoption, Paternity & Shared Parental Leave Policy will be monitored and reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the Management Committee.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

What this policy covers:

This policy outlines the statutory right to take Shared Parental Leave (SPL) to care for a child due to be born or placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015. It also outlines notification requirements before a period of SPL and entitlement to pay during SPL.

SPL gives employees with caring responsibilities for babies or newly adopted children the opportunity to share up to 52 weeks' leave should they wish to do so. Parents taking SPL can take leave in separate blocks, returning to work in between blocks, and both parents can be on leave at the same time. Eligible employees are entitled to submit up to 3 'period of leave' notices and are entitled to take SPL on those dates if a continuous period of leave is requested.

Your entitlements:

Qualifying for Shared Parental Leave

To be entitled to SPL you must:

- Be the mother, father, or main adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or main adopter (each will be referred to in this policy as a parent).

- Have (or share with the other parent) the main responsibility for the care of the child.
- Have at least 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the expected week of birth or at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (known as the 'relevant week').
- Still be in continuous employment until the week before any SPL is taken.

In addition, the other parent must:

- Have at least 26 weeks' employment (employed or self-employed) out of the 66 weeks' prior to the relevant week.
- Have average weekly earnings of at least £30 during at least 13 of the 66 weeks' prior to the relevant week.

If the other parent meets those conditions, but does not qualify for SPL, you may be entitled to the whole SPL period.

You must also follow the statutory notification and information requirements detailed in this policy.

Amount and timing of Shared Parental Leave

SPL must be taken in weekly blocks and within one year period beginning with the date of the baby's birth or the child's placement for adoption.

The maximum of 52 weeks' SPL will be reduced by the number of weeks' maternity or adoption leave that has already been taken by the mother or main adopter (or the number of weeks' Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or maternity allowance already taken if the mother or main adopter is not entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave).

After the birth of a child it is compulsory for the mother to take 2 weeks' maternity leave (4 weeks' for mothers who work in a factory), so in the majority of cases working parents will have the opportunity to split 50 weeks of SPL. SPL is in addition to the statutory right to 2 weeks' leave for fathers and partners. If you wish to take paternity leave you must do so before you take any SPL.

Benefits during Shared Parental Leave

During SPL, you are entitled to receive all your normal contractual benefits, including annual holiday entitlement, with the exception of your normal pay.

Shared Parental Pay

In addition to the requirements regarding entitlement to leave outlined above, if you wish to claim Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) you must have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit over the 8 week period ending with the relevant week.

A maximum of 39 weeks' ShPP is payable, and this will be reduced by the number of weeks' Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or maternity allowance already taken by the mother or main adopter. ShPP is a standard weekly rate (or 90% of your normal weekly earnings if this is lower) which is set by government each tax year.

You must follow the statutory notification requirements detailed below.

Holiday entitlement and Shared Parental Leave

Annual holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during the whole of your SPL. You must discuss and agree with the Organisation, in advance, when your accrued holiday entitlement can be taken.

Holiday entitlement cannot be taken simultaneously with SPL. Accrued holiday can only be taken either before the beginning of the leave, after the end of the leave, or in between blocks of leave. Authorisation must be obtained from the Organisation in the normal way prior to your accrued holiday being taken.

Contact during Shared Parental Leave

The Organisation may make reasonable contact with you during your SPL. In addition, you may work for up to 20 days without bringing the SPL to an end, but work during SPL will not have the effect of extending your SPL period.

These days are referred to as Shared Parental Leave In Touch (SPLIT) days. If you do work, you will be paid your normal rate of pay inclusive of any ShPP entitlement. You are under no obligation to work during SPL, and the Organisation is under no obligation to offer work.

The 20 SPLIT days available during SPL are in addition to the 10 "Keeping in touch" days available during Maternity and Adoption Leave.

Procedure

Employees and managers should, where possible, have an informal discussion prior to employees giving formal notification of intention to take SPL so that statutory entitlements to other types of leave and pay can be discussed, and to ensure that plans for any discontinuous periods of leave can be considered as early as possible.

Notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL and ShPP

You must notify the Organisation in writing at least 8 weeks' before the start date of the first period of SPL. The written notice must contain the following information:

- Your name and the other parent's name.
- The start and end dates of the mother's or main adopter's maternity/adoption leave (or the start and end dates of the statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance period if the mother/main adopter is not entitled to statutory leave).

- The expected date of birth/placement and the actual date of birth/placement if the written notice is given after the birth/placement.
- The amount of SPL and ShPP available and an indication of how much each parent intends to take (this may be varied by a subsequent written notice signed by both parents).
- An indication of the start and end dates of the periods of SPL and ShPP that you intend to take. This indication is not binding and can be amended at a later date.
- A signed declaration that you meet the conditions for entitlement to SPL, that the information provided is accurate and that you will notify the Organisation immediately if you cease to meet the conditions for entitlement.
- A signed declaration from the other parent containing:
 - Their name, address, and National Insurance number.
 - Confirmation that they meet the employment and earnings conditions.
 - Confirmation that, at the time of the birth, they will share the main responsibility for the care of the child.
 - Their consent to the amount of leave the employee intends to take.
 - Confirmation that they will immediately inform you if they cease to satisfy the employment and earnings conditions.

Notice of curtailment of Statutory/Adoption Leave and payments

At the same time that a notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL is submitted, the mother/main adopter must give the Organisation a leave and pay curtailment notice giving 8 weeks' notice of the date on which Maternity/Adoption Leave and Pay is to end (or the date on which Maternity/Adoption Pay is to end if they are not entitled to Maternity/Adoption Leave).

If the mother is only entitled to maternity allowance (and not Maternity Leave) her notice of curtailment must be submitted to Jobcentre Plus. Her maternity allowance cannot be reinstated, so she is in effect giving consent for her partner to take the whole of any ShPP entitlement.

A notice of curtailment is usually binding, but may be revoked in the following circumstances:

- If it becomes apparent that neither parent is entitled to SPL or ShPP; or
- If the curtailment notice was given before the birth and is revoked up to 6 weeks' following the birth (in this case another curtailment notice can be submitted); or

- If the other parent dies.

Notice to take a specific period of SPL and ShPP

The first period of SPL may be identified in the initial notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL. You are entitled to submit a maximum of 3 formal periods of leave notices.

Each period of leave notice must be given at least 8 weeks' before the start of a period of leave, stating the dates of the leave and the dates on which ShPP will be claimed, if applicable.

If the first period of leave notice is given prior to the birth of a child, the notice may express the start date in relation to the date of birth, for example, 'starting 2 weeks' after the baby is born for a period of 4 weeks'.

Confirmation of SPL & ShPP

If a continuous period of leave is requested in each period of leave notice, you will be entitled to take that period of leave and this will be confirmed in writing. If more than one period of leave is requested in a period of leave notice, the Organisation will seek to accommodate the request but this cannot be guaranteed. Your manager will discuss the request with you to determine if it can be accommodated. If it cannot be accommodated, there may be an alternative pattern of leave which can be agreed, or the request may be refused.

The Organisation's decision will be confirmed in writing.

If no agreement is reached within 14 calendar days of the period of leave notice being submitted you can:

- Take the discontinuous periods of leave requested in one continuous block, beginning on the original start date; or
- Withdraw the request within 15 calendar days of the request being submitted. If the request is withdrawn, in these circumstances, it will not count as one of your 3 requests; or
- Take the continuous block starting on a new date, as long as the new date is later than the original start date, and you notify the Organisation of the new start date within 19 calendar days.

Varying a period of leave

If you wish to vary your period of SPL, you are entitled to submit a request to:

- Vary the start date as long as the variation is requested at least 8 weeks' before the original start date and the new start date; or
- Vary or cancel the amount of leave requested at least 8 weeks' before the original start date; or

- Request that a single period of leave becomes a discontinuous period of leave, or vice versa.

A variation will count as one of your 3 periods of leave notices unless:

- It is made as a result of the child being born earlier or later than the expected week of childbirth.
- The Organisation has requested the variation.
- The Organisation has agreed to accept more than 3 periods of leave notices.

The usual 8 week notice requirement may be modified if your child is born early and the new start date for the period of leave is the same length of time following the birth as in the original notice. In this case, notice to vary the start date should be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth of the child.

Evidence requirements

The Organisation may request a copy of the child's birth certificate and the name and address of the other parent's employer.

In the case of adoption, the Organisation may request the name and address of the other parent's employer, along with evidence confirming the following:

- The name and address of the adoption agency.
- The date that the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child.
- The date on which the adoption agency expects to place the child.

Any such request will be made by the Organisation within 14 days of receiving your notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL and ShPP. You must respond to the request for evidence within 14 days (or within 14 days of the birth of the child if our request was made before the child was born).

If a birth certificate has not yet been issued, you must sign a declaration stating that fact along with the date and location of the child's birth. If the other parent has no employer, this must also be declared.

Returning from Shared Parental Leave

If you wish to return early from SPL, or extend the period of your SPL, you must notify the Organisation at least 8 weeks' before both the original end date and the new end date.

If you return to work immediately after a period of SPL which (together with any Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave you may have taken to care for the same child) was 26 weeks' or less, you will return to work in the same job that you left.

If you return to work from a period of SPL which (together with any Maternity/Adoption Leave you may have taken to care for the same child) was more than 26 weeks' you will normally be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed before your absence. If that is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar role on no less favourable terms and conditions.

You will not lose the right to return to work if you do not follow the correct notification procedures. However, the Organisation may take appropriate disciplinary action if you fail to return to work at the end of the SPL period. In the event that you are unable to return to work at the end of the SPL due to ill health, the Organisation's normal sickness absence rules, procedures and payments will apply.

PARENTAL LEAVE

What this policy covers

The Organisation recognises that working parents may need to take additional unpaid leave from work to care for their children. This policy outlines the qualifying conditions and the procedure to request Parental Leave. It also sets out how and when the leave can be taken, provides information on your contractual rights and your right to return to work following Parental Leave.

If you meet the qualifying conditions set out below, you are entitled to take the relevant Statutory Parental Leave for each child. The Group will consider all requests for Parental Leave, however, you must be aware that Parental Leave can only be authorised to be taken at a time to suit the needs of the business.

Your entitlements

Qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for Parental Leave, you must have been employed by the Organisation for a continuous period of one year or more. You must also have responsibility for the child and you must be one of the following:

- The biological mother or father of the child.
- The child's adoptive parent (male or female).
- Have legal responsibility for the child, such as the child's legal guardian.

You must confirm that the requested leave is intended for the purpose of spending time with or caring for the child.

Taking Parental Leave

If you meet the qualifying conditions, you are entitled to the following:

- A maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave for each of your children under the age of five years; the leave must be taken before the child's fifth birthday.

- If your child is adopted and is under the age of 18, you are entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave, to be taken before the fifth anniversary of the date of placement, or before the child's 18th birthday, whichever is earlier.
- If your child is disabled, you are entitled to a total of 18 weeks' Parental Leave, which can be taken at any point up to your child's 18th birthday.

You should be aware that there is a maximum of 4 weeks' Parental Leave that can be taken in any one year.

Parental Leave can only be taken in blocks of one complete week or more, except in the case of children with a disability, when you may take Parental Leave one day at a time.

Contractual benefits during Parental Leave

You are entitled to enjoy your normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of pay, while on Parental Leave.

Procedure

If you meet the qualifying conditions detailed above, you are required to give the Organisation a minimum of 21 calendar days' notice, in writing, of your request to take Parental Leave. The request must specify the start and end date of the intended leave and state that the purpose of the leave is to spend time with or to take care of the child.

You must confirm if you have previously taken Parental Leave, in relation to the same child, during any previous or other employment with another employer. You are also required to provide evidence of your responsibility to the child: either a copy of the child's date of birth or adoption placement and, if applicable, the child's entitlement to a Disability Living Allowance.

If you intend to take a period of Parental Leave immediately after a period of Paternity Leave, you must give the Organisation a minimum of 21 days' notice from the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or placement.

The right to postpone Parental Leave

The Organisation has the right to postpone your Parental Leave for up to 6 months if the timing of your absence will unduly disrupt the business. However, any Parental Leave requested to take place immediately after the birth of your child, or the date of placement, will not be postponed provided that you have given 21 calendar days' notice of your intention to take Parental Leave at this time.

Returning to work after Parental Leave

You are normally entitled to return to work following Parental Leave to the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will remain unchanged upon your return from a period of Parental Leave.

If your Parental Leave has been combined with a period of Maternity, Adoption or Paternity Leave of more than 4 consecutive weeks, and it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same position you held before commencing leave, the Organisation will offer you a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

Breach of this policy

If you take a period of Parental Leave under this policy for any purpose other than to spend time with or otherwise care for your child, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

DATA PROTECTION

MHA controls the personal information that we collect, this means that we are legally responsible for how we collect, hold and use personal information. It also means that we are required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) when collecting, holding and using personal information.