

Parental leave policy

This policy sets out the Company's stance on providing parental leave to its employees who are both natural parents and adoptive parents. Parental leave is available to eligible employees who wish to take time off work to spend with their child, for example, to accompany the child during a planned stay in hospital, or to go on holiday with the child. Statutory parental leave is unpaid leave.

Entitlement

You must meet certain eligibility criteria in order to take statutory parental leave, as follows:

- you must have at least one year's continuous employment with the Company counted from the date that parental leave would start
- you have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child
- your child is under 18 years of age
- you take the leave before your child's 18th birthday
- you provide the Company with evidence of eligibility when requested.

The following evidence may be requested from you in order to assess your eligibility for parental leave:

- that you have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child in relation to whom leave will be taken
- the child's date of birth (in respect of natural parents)
- the date of adoption placement (in respect of adoptive parents)
- the child's entitlement to Disability Living Allowance (if appropriate) to permit you to take leave in blocks of one day rather than one week.

Length of leave

Eligible employees will be entitled to take a total of 18 weeks' leave in relation to each child until the child is 18 years of age. No more than four weeks can be taken in relation to each child in one year.

A year is defined as a period of 12 months beginning on the date on which the employee first, or more recently, became entitled to take parental leave in respect of the child in question and each successive period of 12 months beginning on the anniversary of that date.

Save for in relation to a disabled child in which case leave may be taken in blocks of one day, part of a week counts as a week so that if a full-time employee takes three days' parental leave and then returns to work, one week is taken away from the 18 weeks.

Procedure

You must give a minimum notice period of 21 days before the leave is due to start and you must give notice of the exact day on which you wish the leave to start and end. In the case of fathers who want to take parental leave straight after a baby is born, or prospective adoptive parents who want to take parental leave straight after a child is placed with them for adoption, 21 days' notice of the expected week of childbirth or the expected week of adoption must be given.

When the Company receives notice of intention to take parental leave, we may ask for evidence of eligibility as set out above.

The Company reserves the right to postpone a period of parental leave if we believe the operation of the business will be unduly disrupted by the your absence. Leave will not be postponed where it is to be taken on the birth of a child or on the placement of a child for adoption. Where leave is to be postponed, we will discuss the reasons for the postponement with you and confirm in writing the newly agreed dates of leave. Leave will not be postponed for a period longer than six months from the start

date of the leave originally requested.

Before taking parental leave

Shortly after we have received a notification from you that you wish to take parental leave, a meeting will be arranged between you and your line manager. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss:

- your entitlement to parental leave
- the requirements to give appropriate notice
- arrangements to cover your duties in your absence
- your right to return to work
- opportunities for flexible working
- the nature of any appropriate contact during parental leave
- the fact that parental leave is unpaid

During parental leave

Your normal terms and conditions will apply during parental leave except for in relation to pay.

We will make arrangements for your duties to be covered for the duration of your leave. We would like to be able to keep you up to date with any developments at work that may affect you or any social events that occur.

Returning to work

Employees returning after an isolated period of parental leave lasting four weeks or less, or after a period of parental leave lasting four weeks or less which consecutively followed another period of statutory leave which did not include any period of additional maternity leave, or additional adoption leave, are entitled to return to the job in which they were employed before the absence.

Employees returning to work after a period of parental leave lasting more than four weeks, or after a period of parental leave lasting four weeks or less, which did consecutively follow a period of additional maternity leave or additional adoption leave, are entitled to return from leave to the job in which they were employed before the absence or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable and appropriate for them in the circumstances.

Terms and conditions will not be less favourable than those which would have been applied if you had not been absent.