

Parent Support and Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave Policy

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Additionally refer to:

- Adoption Leave Procedure (W19 Leave Policy: Chapter 1)
- Fertility, Pregnancy and Maternity Leave Policy (W19 Leave Policy: Chapter 4)
- Special Leave Policy (W19 Leave Policy: Chapter 8)
- Neonatal Care Leave Policy (W62)
- Disciplinary Policy (W7)

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1.1	March 2026	Nick Dowd	Draft	Parent Support (paternity) Leave procedure moved into its own policy. Amendments in line with Employment Rights Act changes in April 2026, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 right to new parent support (paternity) leave. • New section added for Bereaved Partner Leave

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1 Policy on a Page

Eligibility

You have 12 months' continuous NHS service at the beginning of the week the baby is expected to be born or proposed date of placement and remain employed until the actual date of birth/placement.



Amount of Leave

You will receive full pay for the two weeks taken any time during the first 52 weeks of the birth of the child or the placement for adoption.

You have less than 12 months' continuous NHS service but more than 26 weeks continuous Trust service at the 15th week before the baby is due or ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched with a child and remains employed until the actual date of birth/ placement.



You will be entitled to two weeks Statutory Paternity Pay

You have less than 26 weeks continuous Trust service at the 15th week before the baby is due or ending with the week in which adopter is notified of having been matched with a child and remains employed until the actual date of birth.



You are eligible for two weeks unpaid leave. Request an SPP1 from Pay Services.

Application Process

Employee completes an application form (appendix B) for Maternity Support Leave, no later than the end of the 15th week before the baby is expected to be born or within 7 days of the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with a child to be placed for adoption.



Manager responds within 7 days using Section B of application form (Appendix B). Employees only need to give 28 days' notice of the dates they wish to take



Leave Commences



If employee wishes to change the leave start date they must write to their line manager giving at least 28 days' notice (or as soon as is reasonably possible).



Manager notifies Pay Services of employee taking Maternity Support Leave by submitting a copy of the Application for Maternity Support Leave

2 Policy Statement and Purpose

- 2.1** The Trust is committed to providing staff with access to leave arrangements which support them in balancing work responsibilities with personal commitments. This policy describes the Trust's approach to this and describes the entitlement staff may have to leave and pay.
- 2.2** The Trust recognises that fathers or partners (including those in same sex couples) need time at home to help and support their partners during the birth/adoption of a child. The Trust applies the arrangements set out within NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook ('the handbook') to support in managing this period of the employment relationship.
- 2.3** This document was last updated in March 2026 to reflect the changes in the Employment Rights Act that came into effect from 6 April 2026.

3 Scope

- 3.1** This policy applies to all staff directly employed by the Trust whether full time or part-time, temporary or permanent including those employed via the Temporary Staffing Department. Some entitlements to pay and leave have eligibility requirements, as described in the policy.
- 3.2** The policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Group Chief People Officer

- 4.1** Overall responsibility, via the People and OD team, to oversee the implementation of this policy and ensure that appropriate processes and actions are in place.

People Advisory Team (HR)

- 4.2** To provide support and guidance on the implementation of this policy and ensure consistency of approach across the Trust.
- 4.3** Monitor the application of this policy, adhere to relevant legislation, and update the policy as required.

Managers

- 4.4** Ensure they understand and comply with this policy and apply this consistently across their teams.
- 4.5** Working in partnership with employees to implement this policy, providing advice and support as needed.

Employees

- 4.6 Comply with the notification requirements in the policy and work together with their manager to make arrangements for their leave.

5. Ante-natal leave

Am I entitled to time off to attend ante-natal Appointments and classes?

Section 15.98 of the handbook states:

The pregnant employee's partner will be entitled to unpaid leave to attend two ante natal appointments. Unpaid leave, up to a maximum of six and a half hours per appointment can be accessed. The pregnant employee's partner includes a spouse, civil partner (of either sex) or a person with whom she is in a long-term relationship.

6. Parent support (paternity) leave and pay and ante-natal leave

Who does Parent Support leave and/or pay and ante-natal leave apply to?

Section 15.111 of the handbook sets out that this *applies to the father of the child (including adoptive fathers), the mother's spouse or partner (whether opposite or same sex) or nominated carer.*

The Trust requires that employees applying for Parent Support (Paternity) Leave, Pay and/or ante-natal leave:-

- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing; **and**
- are the biological father of the child, the nominated carer or the spouse/partner (male or female) of the mother/adopter; **or**
- are an adoptive parent who is 'newly matched with a child' and can provide appropriate documentary evidence

7. Parent support leave Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024

How much leave am I entitled to and when can I take my leave?

Under section 15.113 of the NHS Terms and Conditions handbook, all employees are entitled to two weeks' of parent support leave. Fathers and partners will be able to take their leave at any time during the first 52 weeks of the birth of the child or the placement for adoption. Employees will have the flexibility to take their 2 week paternity leave entitlement as two separate one-week blocks. This changes from the previous requirement of taking one continuous week or two consecutive weeks.

When must I take my Parent Support Leave?

Employees will need to inform their employer of their entitlement to their leave 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth, however, employees will only need to give 28 days' notice of the dates they wish to take. This adjustment facilitates better planning for both the Trust and employees.

Can my Parent support (paternity) leave be split?

Fathers and partners can choose to split their leave and pay into two non-consecutive periods of leave of a week each. (Previous to the amendment, employees could only take one period of leave of either one or two weeks).

8. Pay During Parent Support (paternity) leave

What pay am I entitled to during Parent support (paternity) leave?

Subject to qualifying criteria employees may be entitled to

- Statutory Parent Support (Paternity) Pay (will increase to £194.32 from 6 April 2026, or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower)); or
- Occupational Parent Support (Paternity) Pay.

9. Occupational Parent Support Pay

Am I entitled to Occupational parent support Pay?

In accordance with section 15.114 of the handbook: *employees granted new parent support leave will receive full pay during this period if they have 12 months' continuous service with their or any other NHS employer before they take their leave.*

If I am entitled, how much Occupational new parent support Pay will I receive?

In accordance with section 15.115 of the handbook if you meet the qualifying criteria above: *full pay will be calculated on the basis of the average weekly earnings rules used for calculating occupational maternity / adoption pay entitlements. The employee will receive full pay less any statutory paternity pay receivable.*

See **Calculation of maternity/adoption pay** in the FAQ's relating to New Parent Leave – Chapter 4 of the Leave Cluster of Policies.

What is my entitlement if there is a multiple birth?

In accordance with section 15.116 of the handbook: *only one period of parent support pay is available when there is a multiple birth.*

10. Statutory pay during Parent support (paternity) leave

If I am not entitled to Occupational Pay, am I entitled to Statutory Parent Support Pay?

In accordance with section 15.117:

Employees who are not eligible for the two weeks of pay during their new parent support leave may still be entitled to statutory paternity pay subject to meeting the qualifying conditions described in the relevant legislation. Details of the qualifying conditions can be found on www.gov.uk.

Statutory Parent Support (Paternity) Pay will increase to £194.32 from 6 April 2026, or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower)). The latest pay rate can be found at www.gov.uk.

11. Notice of Intention to Take Leave

How much notice do I need to give my manager when taking Parent support (paternity) Pay?

You must notify your Manager in writing of your intention to take Parent Support Leave by submitting the appropriate request form **either** at least 15 weeks before the baby is due **or** within 7 days of being told by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child. Employees will only need to give 28 days' notice of the dates they wish to take.

For new starters, shorter notice periods may be agreed.

There is a temporary shorter notice period of 28 days (instead of 15 weeks) where the expected due date is between 5 April and 25 July 2026

Can I change my mind about the start date?

Yes provided you give at least 28 days' notice or as soon as is reasonably possible. Again this should be in writing.

12. Temporary Staffing (Bank) Workers

What if I only work through the Temporary Staffing Department?

If you are engaged through the Temporary Staffing Department or engaged directly by a department on a zero hours contract you will be entitled to Statutory New Parent Support Leave and Pay provisions provided that:

- i) You have 12 months continuous service with their or any other NHS Employer, and
- ii) You comply with the conditions set out in NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook.

You will be entitled to Occupational Paternity Leave and Pay where:

- i) You have worked a regular pattern of work (as a minimum once every month) for 12 months with the NHS by the beginning of the 11th week before the EWC, and
- ii) You comply with the arrangements set out above for Occupational New Parent Support Leave and Pay.

13. Stillbirth

What happens if our baby is stillborn?

- 13.1 Where the birth is after 24 weeks of pregnancy you will be entitled to paid new parent support leave, subject to satisfying other relevant criteria.
- 13.2 Where the pregnancy loss is before 25 weeks partners are entitled to up to 5 days leave on full pay. This applies whether the loss happens directly to their partner or their baby's surrogate and regardless of the nature of their loss, or their length of service.
- 13.3 Pregnancy loss includes but is not limited to miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy and neonatal loss.
- 13.4 When supporting an employee through pregnancy loss, managers can access advice and guidance from reputable online sources such as the [Miscarriage Alliance](#) or internally via the People Advisory Team. Contact details for support during and after pregnancy loss are contained within Appendix C of the Maternity Leave Procedure.
- 13.5 If an individual or couple were to unfortunately experience more than one pregnancy loss this entitlement would apply to each.
- 13.6 Employees are entitled to paid time off to accompany their partners to appointments relating to pregnancy loss, which do not fall within an agreed period of leave, including but not limited to medical examinations, scans and tests, and mental health-related appointments.
- 13.7 Requests from employees to temporarily amend their working pattern to support them through the difficult time of grieving and recovery following pregnancy loss should be treated sensitively and supportively.

14. Pre-term birth

What happens if our baby is born early

If your baby is born before 37 weeks gestation, we will support you with at least 2 weeks paid compassionate leave, in addition to your new parent support leave. This will help you spend time with your baby and partner following the birth. The time may be used flexibly to best suit your needs, it does not have to be taken in one go. Please discuss the details with your manager as early as possible. Managers should record this as authorised paid special leave.

Premature babies may have ongoing medical needs requiring regular appointments and check-ups. Employees and managers should work together to agree time off for appointments in accordance with the Special Leave Procedure.

15. Returning to Work After Parent Support Leave

What job do I return to when I come back to work?

You are entitled to return to the same post following Parent Support Leave.

16. Annual leave and Bank Holidays during Parent Support Leave

Do I accrue Annual Leave during Parent Support Leave?

Annual leave will continue to accrue during Parent Support Leave. If you intend to take annual leave alongside Support Leave, the procedure for requesting annual leave remains as standard and must be taken at the beginning or end of Parent Support (Paternity) Leave and not during the leave period.

What happens if a General Public Holiday falls during the period of my Parent Leave?

For Parent Leave the period of leave should be extended by the number of general public holidays that have fallen in the period. Parent leave must be taken in consecutive weeks which include any accrued general public holidays.

17. Undertaking Other Work

Can I work for the Trust or another employer during my Parent Leave?

You must not undertake any paid work with the Trust or any other employer during the paid Parent Support Leave period. If you do so, New Parent Support Leave and Parent Support Pay will automatically cease, and the leave will be treated as unauthorised absence. In these circumstances, action may be considered under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

18. Pension Provisions

What happens to my pension?

Pension rights and contributions shall be dealt with in accordance with NHS Pension Scheme Regulations. Both Employee and Employer contributions will be due on the normal 'unreduced' pay based on the month prior to the new parent support leave. Therefore you will be required to pay arrears of contributions relating to any period of unpaid absence in order to retain the pensionable service. These arrears will be collected immediately following the period of leave.

19. Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave

What is Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave?

The Trust recognises the need to provide compassionate and practical support to employees who become the primary carer of a child following the death of the child's mother or primary adopter. This policy sets out the Trust's arrangements for Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 2025 and associated regulations.

Who is eligible for Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave?

An employee will be eligible for Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave where:

- The child is under one year old, or within the first year of adoption, at the time of the bereavement
- The child's mother or primary carer has died
- the employee is the child's father or is married to or the civil partner of the child's mother or adopter
- The employee has main responsibility for the child after the bereavement.

This is a day-one right and with no minimum service requirement.

How much Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave can I take?

Eligible employees are entitled to take a single period of up to 52 weeks' Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave.

Am I paid during Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave?

No, Bereaved partner (Paternity) leave is unpaid. However, other types of leave may also be applicable (see Special Leave Policy (W19 Leave Policy: Chapter 8))

How much notice do I have to give before taking Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave?

Employees should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable of their intention to take Bereaved Partner (Paternity) Leave. However, it is acknowledged that this may be required at short notice and managers should be as flexible as possible in accommodating requests.

What support is available to me?

The Trust recognises that bereavement is a profoundly difficult experience. Employees are encouraged to discuss additional support options with their manager, including special leave, flexible working arrangements, and access to Occupational Health or employee support services.

20 Review process

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are legislation changes.

21 Training

There is no mandatory training associated with this policy. Advice and support can be obtained from the People Advisory Team sath.hradvice@nhs.net.

22 EQIA Statement

An equality impact assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken on this policy. This policy applies to all persons equally and does not discriminate positively or negatively between protected characteristics.

23 Process for monitoring compliance

Aspect of compliance or effectiveness being monitored	Monitoring method	Responsibility for monitoring (job title)	Frequency of monitoring	Group or Committee that will review the findings and monitor completion of any resulting action plan
Access and uptake to be monitored	At policy review	People Advisory Team Manager	At policy review	Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC)

24 References

- Employment Rights Act 2025
- The Paternity leave (amendment) Regulations 2024.

All the above are available from the Government website – www.gov.uk

- Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions - <https://www.nhsemployers.org/publications/tchandbook>

25 Associated Documentation

- Adoption Leave Procedure
- Fertility, Pregnancy and Maternity Leave Policy
- Neonatal Care Leave Policy
- Special Leave Policy (W19 Leave Policy: Chapter 8)

All the above are available from:

Internal - http://intranet/hr/HR_Policies.asp

External - <https://www.sath.nhs.uk/working-with-us/hr/policies/>

Appendix 1

Application for Parent Support Leave

Section A - To be completed by the employee:			
Part 1 - Personal Details			
First Name:		Surname:	
Employee No:		Department:	
Start Date with the Trust:		Start Date with the NHS:	
Part 2 – Notification and Evidence			
I wish to request Parent Support Leave as: (please tick)			
- I am the biological father / nominated carer / spouse/partner		<input type="checkbox"/>	
- I am an adoptive parent of a newly matched child		<input type="checkbox"/>	
The expected date of childbirth / adoption is: _____ / _____ / _____.			
I have attached the following documentary evidence (copy documents are accepted):			
MAT B1		Matching Certificate	
I understand that should I wish to change the commencement date of leave I must write to my Manager giving at least 28 days' notice (or as soon as is reasonably possible).			
Part 3 – Parent Support Leave dates requested any time during 52 weeks			
I intend to take (please circle):			
	1 week		2 weeks
I have met the criteria in paragraph 3 of the policy. The expected dates of my New Parent Support Leave will be:			

WEEK 1		WEEK 2	
Date:		Date:	
I understand that I must take the leave within 52 weeks of the child's actual birth / placement. I understand that this leave must be taken in blocks of one week.			
Part 4 – Paternity Pay Request			
Please select ONE of the following options as defined in section 4 of the policy : (please tick)			
I believe I have met the required continuous NHS service requirement to receive full NHS Occupational New Parent Support (Paternity) pay.			
I have less than 12 months' continuous NHS service but more than 26 weeks continuous Trust service (EITHER at the 15 th week before the baby is due OR 26 weeks ending with the week the adopter is notified of being matched) and believe I have met the required service requirements to receive Statutory Paternity Pay.			
I wish to apply for unpaid Parent Support Leave, and I am aware that this will be without pay.			
Part 5 – Declaration			
I have read and understand the Parent Support Leave Policy (Human Resources policy HR26) and wish to apply for leave as indicated above. I have attached the required documentation and plan to remain in employment until the date of birth/placement of the child.			
Signed:		Date:	

Section B - To be completed by the Manager:			
I confirm I have discussed this policy and its implications with the employee above. I have discussed and confirmed the dates as accurate according to the information with which I have been provided.			
Name (Print):		Job Title:	
Signed:		Date:	
Is this a revised application? <small>(ie has this application been submitted previously but the date has now changed)</small>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date copy of this application, evidence & ESR Change of Circumstances form sent to Pay Services:	

Line Manager Action:

Please retain a copy of the signed documentation, evidence and ESR Change of Circumstances form on the individual's personal file and send the Application for New Parent Support Leave to Pay Services with an ESR Change of Circumstances form. Please note if the commencement of leave date changes a new Application for New Parent Support Leave must be completed and a further copy and change of circumstance form sent to Pay Services indicating that this is a revised application.