

# Paternity Guidance

## 1. Policy Statement

We know that spending time with your children whilst they're growing up is an important part of us enjoying life's everyday moments. If you've just found out about your new addition to your family – congratulations!

This guidance tells you all about paternity, which is for parents to be who are not taking maternity leave. It's non contractual and may be changed in the future. If you have any questions about family leave, please contact HR Services.

## 2. Policy Owner

The policy is owned by the Director of Reward & HR Services, Kevin Blake.

## 3. Who does it apply to?

This guidance applies to anyone with a GB contract of employment.

## 4. Policy Detail - What do I need to know or do?

This guidance tells you about planned time off work to be with your family on paternity, which is for parents to be, not taking maternity leave.

We've put the guidance into 3 sections:

- Before your Leave
- During your Leave
- After your Leave

## Before your Leave

What do I need to know or do?	Paternity
When should I tell you about my news?	Please tell us as soon as possible and in writing so that we can ensure we put in place any support that you might need. You'll need to give us formal notice to take leave.
Can I take time off for appointments whilst my partner and I are expecting a baby or organising adoption?	<p>You can take paid time off to go to appointments that are advised by your partners Medical Practitioner or Midwife; or your Adoption Agency.</p> <p>Please try and minimise your time away from work by organising your appointments at the start or end of the day or around your specific working time or schedule. We appreciate this isn't always possible.</p> <p>You need to let your manager know and you may be requested to provide a declaration.</p>
My partner and I are having IVF treatment, can I take time off for these appointments?	<p>You can take paid time off to go to IVF appointments that are advised by your or your partners Medical Practitioner or Consultant.</p> <p>Please try and minimise your time away from work by organising your appointments at the start or end of the day or around your specific working time or schedule. We appreciate this isn't always possible.</p> <p>You need to let your manager know and evidence of your appointment may be requested and needs to be available, or you may be requested to provide a declaration.</p>
Am I eligible to take paternity leave for the birth or adoption?	Regardless of how long you've worked for us you are entitled to take paternity leave for the birth or adoption.
I'm having a child through surrogacy, what am I entitled to?	If you're genetically related to the child (i.e. egg or sperm donor), you can choose to take paternity (if eligible) instead of adoption, however, you are not able to take both. Dependant on your situation please pursue either paternity or adoption leave.

What do I need to know or do?	Paternity
How much time off can I take?	Up to 4 weeks.
Can I decide how much time off to take?	Yes, you can take less than the 4 week entitlement, but it must all be taken in one go.
Can I decide when to start my leave?	<p>Yes, but it must end within 56 days of the birth (or due date if the baby is early) or adoption.</p> <p>You don't have to give an exact date, but you need to tell us when you want your leave to start e.g. the day after the birth or adoption.</p>
What notice do I need to give to take leave?	<p>Please talk to your manager as early as possible about your plans.</p> <p>You need to give notice within the same timeframes and give the same information as the birthing parent to be, which is at least 15 weeks before due date; or the primary caregiver adopter, which is within 7 days of being matched (UK adoptions) or for overseas adoptions within 28 days of your official notification.</p> <p>We have a form to help you do this which you need to attach to your time off request on myHR.</p>
Will I receive a reply?	We'll usually write to you within 28 days to confirm your leave dates.
What evidence do I need to provide?	You don't need to provide any evidence.
Can I change the start date of my leave?	<p>You can but you'll need to give us 28 days of notice before your original start date.</p> <p>If your baby arrives early you need to let us know straight away.</p>

Will I get paid when I'm on paternity leave?

You'll receive full pay (basic salary) for up to 4 weeks, depending on how much leave you decide to take. This includes any entitlement to statutory paternity pay (SPP).

## What do I need to know or do?

## Paternity

What are my entitlements if I am a bereaved parent?

We understand that the loss of a child, of any age, brings heartbreak and devastation and we are here to support you through this very difficult time.

On our intranet, you have access to the myLife Wellbeing portal which is a resource to support you through these types of loss. Through myLife, counselling is available to you on a 24/7 basis. You have the option of talking to a trained professional over the phone or via the on-line chat facility. This service is free and any advice and support you receive is private and totally confidential. If you've opted into our private healthcare, you also have our AXA Healthcare Plan providing access to private medical treatment and counselling, and our AXA Doctor at Hand which gives you a fast, easy way to see a GP.

We know that this experience brings with it undescrivable sadness, and we want to provide you with the right support in regard to taking time out to allow you to start grieving for your child. You should be aware that as a bereaved parent (including foster parents, adopters and guardians), following the loss of a child below the age of 18 (including a still-birth after 24 weeks), you're entitled to an additional week of statutory bereavement leave on top of the 1 week of fully paid bereavement leave given in our Time Off Policy.

As we know the bereavement journey will take some time, you are able to take this leave within 56 weeks of the child's death. In addition, if you have at least 26 weeks of service, you will be eligible for statutory bereavement pay at the lower of the statutory rate or 90% of your average earnings.

In order to ensure that you receive the correct pay during this period of leave, your bereavement leave needs to be placed on to your myHR time off record. This can be input by either yourself or your line manager. If a bereaved parent is taking statutory bereavement leave, either you or your manager should also notify HR Services via askHR.

If you wish to discuss this entitlement or your wellbeing please reach out to your line manager or HR Services and we will do all that we can to support you during this difficult time.

What do I need to know or do?	Paternity
What are my entitlements if I am a bereaved parent? (continued)	If your bereavement is related to early pregnancy loss (up to 24 weeks gestation) or failed fertility please see our Time Off Policy.

## During your Leave

What do I need to know or do?	Paternity
What happens to my allowances?	We'll need to review if you receive any allowances, depending on the reason for payment your allowances may stop.
When will I be paid?	You'll be paid as normal which may be subject to your usual deductions.
What will happen to my benefits during leave?	<p>All contractual benefits, apart from pay outside of your basic salary, will normally stay in place during your leave.</p> <p>We'll continue to pay into your pension whilst you take paid leave.</p>
Do I continue to accrue holiday during my leave?	You'll continue to accrue your holiday (contractual and bank holidays) in the normal way during all your leave.
What contact can I expect during my leave?	You'll only be away for a short amount of time, so if we don't have contact during your leave you can let us know about your new addition when you're back at work.

## After your Leave

What do I need to know or do?	Paternity
What's my return to work date?	We'll expect you back in work on the date we agreed, depending on how many weeks of the 4 week entitlement you have chosen to take. If you're eligible you could also take parental leave. You'll need to provide the necessary notice of your request.
Can I have a more flexible return to work?	<p>It's up to you how you plan your time off with your holiday entitlement. Please discuss this with your manager as you will need their approval.</p> <p>If you're looking for a permanent change to your terms and conditions, then you'll need to put in a flexible working request.</p> <p>If, at any point you have concerns about your working arrangements, please refer to our Productivity Tools and Support policy and discuss your concerns with your manager.</p>
What role will I come back to?	You'll only be on leave for a short time, so you'll come back to the same job.

## 5. Policy breach and consequences – What happens if I don't follow it?

If you don't follow the requirements, you may lose your entitlement to family leave or pay. If you give us false information to support your leave request, then this will be treated as alleged fraud and may be a serious disciplinary matter.



## 6. Related Documents

The following related documents can be found on our [Policies and Disclosure](#) page on Focus:

- Family Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Guidance
- Shared Parental Leave Guidance
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Time Off Policy
- Pay & Benefits Policy
- Flexible Working Guidance
- Productivity Tools and Support Policy