



Paternity Support Policy

Policy document

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Revision cycle: Ongoing review

Policy Owner: Director, People and Culture

Approved by: Policy and Management Board

Regular review and minor amendments approved by: Director, People and Culture

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy is part of our suite of Family-Friendly Policies for Ofcom. Our aspiration is to be the best employer for families, where colleagues are supported to have a healthy work-life balance.

This policy communicates Ofcom's Paternity Support arrangements and application procedures to ensure that all colleagues requesting Paternity Leave are treated fairly and consistently throughout the organisation.

All Ofcom colleagues and Career and Performance Managers (CPM's) are required to be familiar with, and act in line with this policy.

This policy is applicable to all colleagues employed directly by Ofcom, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender, who wish to share the care of their child in the child's first year after birth or adoption, irrespective of their length of service.

2. Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Partner	Refers to the second parent, who at the child's date of birth or date of placement, is married to, is the civil partner of, or the partner of the primary parent (the birth parent or adopter) and has parental responsibility for the child.
EPP	Enhanced Paternity Pay

Term	Definition
Expected week of Childbirth (EWC)	Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) is the week, beginning on a Sunday, in which the birth parent is expected by her doctor or midwife to give birth.
Qualifying week	The 15 th week before the expected week of childbirth, or the week in which the adopting parent is notified of having been matched with a child for adoption.

3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Colleague Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform your CPM and the People Operations Team of pregnancy or adoption at the earliest opportunity. To inform your CPM and the People Operations Team of the intended start and end date of your Paternity Leave.
CPM Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the colleague is treated sensitively and fairly in the application of the policy, as well as in line with the Dignity and Respect at Work policy. Inform and update the colleague on any workplace changes promotion/professional development opportunities and any other relevant information. Support the return to work
P&T responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the CPM with guidance and advice on the application of the policy. Ensure the policy is followed correctly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm Paternity leave and pay arrangements in writing
Payroll Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay Enhanced Paternity Pay (EPP). Respond to any payroll related queries from the colleague.

4. Paternity leave and pay

To qualify for Paternity Leave and Paternity Pay, you must:

- a) be employed directly by Ofcom.
- b) have complied with the notice requirements set out in section 5 below.
- c) have responsibility, or expect to be responsible for, the child's upbringing and either be:
 - i) the biological father

- ii) the partner of the child's mother or;
- iii) the secondary adopter of a child through a UK or overseas adoption agency, fostering to adopt, or a surrogacy arrangement.

To be eligible for paternity pay, you must earn at least £123 a week on average for 8 weeks before your qualifying week.

In the case of adoption, including fostering to adopt, you must provide proof of adoption on Workday to qualify for Paternity Pay. This can be in the form of a letter from your adoption agency or the matching certificate.

5. Notification of paternity leave

You should discuss your intention to take paternity leave with your CPM at the earliest opportunity. There are three separate processes for providing this notification and these depend on whether you are:

- a) adopting from within the UK.
- b) adopting from overseas; or
- c) the biological parent or having the child through a surrogacy arrangement.

Formal notification should be submitted on Workday, within the given timeframe as set out below:

<p>Adopting within the UK (including Fostering to adopt)</p>	<p>If you are adopting within the UK, including Fostering to adopt, you are required to complete the Paternity Form- Adoption on Workday.</p> <p>You must give formal written notice within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption. You will need to provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date you were notified of having been matched with a child. • the start date of the placement. • the length of leave you intend to take. • the start date of your leave.
<p>Adopting from overseas</p>	<p>If you are adopting from overseas, you are required to complete the form on Workday.</p> <p>If you are adopting from overseas, you must give written formal notice within 28 days of having been notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption. The following information will be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date official notification was received. • The date the child is expected to enter the UK. • The actual date you want to start your leave (this date cannot be before the child enters the UK).

<p>Birth or having the child through a surrogacy arrangement (parental order)</p>	<p>To qualify for Paternity Leave, you must give written notice at least 28 days before each intended period of leave. This is done by submitting the Paternity Leave form- Birth on Workday</p> <p>For a surrogacy arrangement, you need to submit a written notification that you are having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement and provide a declaration in the form of a written statement that you will apply for a parental order within 6 months of the child's birth, to reassign legal parenthood to you.</p>
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Once you have provided written notice, amended requests for Paternity Leave should be made at least 28 days before the new start date, or the date originally intended for the leave to begin; whichever is earlier.

You will receive written confirmation from Ofcom of your leave entitlement, and expected date of return to work, within 28 days of confirming your intended Paternity Leave start date.

6. What we offer

Ofcom offers an Enhanced Paternity Pay (EPP) to top up the statutory provisions. EPP consists of **eight weeks** Paternity Leave on full pay, which can be taken to care for your baby or adopted child. This is regardless of the number of children born as a result of the pregnancy or the number of children placed under the same adoption arrangement.

EPP is treated as earnings and therefore subject to PAYE and National Insurance deductions and will normally be paid at the same intervals as your monthly salary.

The leave can either be taken as a single block of up to eight weeks per pregnancy, or adoption, or in two non-consecutive blocks of any length, however, please note that each block should be no shorter than one week

7. Commencement of paternity leave

You can choose when you would like your Paternity Leave and pay to start, providing it is all taken within the first 52 weeks following:

- The date your baby is born or was expected to be born
- The date your adoption placement starts
- For overseas adoption, the date your adopted child arrives in the UK.

8. Antenatal / Adoption appointments (including appointments related to surrogacy)

You can take paid time off to accompany your birth partner to up to two pregnancy-related appointments. This includes antenatal classes, appointments with a GP, hospital, midwife or health visitor.

In an adoption scenario, you may take paid time off to attend an appointment arranged by the adoption agency in relation to the proposed adoption.

In a surrogacy arrangement scenario, this time also includes appointments to accompany the surrogacy to pregnancy-related appointments. This paid time is limited to two occasions.

Please speak to your CPM to ensure that you can balance appointments with your work responsibilities effectively.

There is no qualifying period of employment for this right, but you should provide sufficient notice to your CPM of any pending appointments.

9. Contractual rights and other benefits

All terms and conditions of employment remain in force during your period of Paternity Leave, except for the terms relating to pay, specifically:

Holiday Entitlement: You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement through your period of paternity leave. This entitlement includes your standard holiday entitlement, public holidays, flexible holidays through Choices and one additional day's holiday for your birthday. You cannot take paid holiday during your period of paternity leave. Colleagues in England and Wales are usually provided with an additional day's leave over the Christmas and New Year period to ensure parity with colleagues based in Scotland and Northern Ireland who have additional Bank Holiday allocation throughout the year. If you are a colleague in England or Wales on paternity leave during this period and this is provided, you will accrue this additional discretionary day.

Pension: You will continue to receive contributions from Ofcom to your Ofcom pension fund or your pension allowance in cash (whichever is applicable) during your paternity leave period (i.e. up to eight weeks) based on your salary.

Once the child is born, you are advised to create a 'life event' on Choices so that you can make changes under your Choices selection.

10. Contact on Paternity Leave

During your paternity leave, we may make reasonable contact with you, for example, to discuss your return to work or to communicate important information, such as changes at the workplace that might affect you upon your return. The preferred method of communication should be agreed with your CPM before you commence paternity leave.

11. Returning to work

If you would like a more flexible working arrangement to help you attain a better work-life balance on your return from Paternity leave, have a conversation with your CPMs early as possible. Ofcom supports a culture of flexible working and you can talk about options on working hours, working patterns and where you work, and how it can work

best for you and for your team. Formal (involving contractual changes) and informal routes are available. For more information, please refer to the [Flexible Working policy](#) which sets out the various options for flexible working

On your return from paternity leave, Ofcom will offer support to help you adjust back to work, which is provided by Ofcom's parental support partner, Parentcloud. Ofcom will offer remote one-to-one consultations with Parentcloud specialists, who can assist returners with common challenges facing working parents. You can decide how to use these sessions to best suit your needs, choosing from return-to-work coaching, consultations on infant sleep and child behaviour. The PeopleTeam will contact you to advise how to book these sessions.

12. Neonatal leave and pay

Ofcom recognises the emotional and financial difficulties which arise from premature births and situations where a newborn is immediately hospitalised after birth.

Colleagues who are entitled to paternity leave under this policy will also be entitled to an additional period of leave to add to the end of their paternity leave if their baby is in hospital for at least 7 days following birth.

Colleagues will be offered neonatal leave on full pay, equivalent to the number of days that their baby has been in hospital for, immediately following birth, for at least 7 days. This leave is capped at 16 weeks.

Neonatal leave must be taken before the colleague returns to work.

Colleagues who are eligible to take neonatal leave should notify their CPM as soon as is reasonably practicable after the birth of the baby to let them know that there have been complications. During their paternity leave, they should confirm to their CPM how many weeks their baby was in the hospital and give their CPM 8 weeks' notice of when their paternity leave will cease and therefore when their neonatal leave will commence.

13. Breakdown of the Placement in Adoption

Your Paternity Leave and pay should continue if the adoption placement does not work out (disrupted placement), if for example:

- The placement does not go ahead.
- The child has to return to the agency.
- The child sadly dies.

You must inform your CPM and the People Team of the need for this at the earliest opportunity.

14. Combining Paternity Leave with other types of leave

Shared Parental Leave gives you and your partner more flexibility in determining the best approach to taking time off in the Maternity Leave year. Assuming you are both eligible, you will be able to choose how you can split the available leave between both parents. For full details please refer to the [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#).

If you wish to take both Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave, you must complete your period of 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.

If you want more time to care for your baby, Parental Leave can be added to a period of Paternity Leave. Please refer to the [Parental Leave policy](#).

15. Additional Support

If you would like to discuss anything in relation to this policy, either for yourself or as a CPM, please don't hesitate to contact the [\[redacted\]](#)

You can also access a range of other support through our [\[redacted\]](#) programme.

Parentcloud - Ofcom has partnered with a provider, Parent Cloud to offer colleagues with children a hub of resources. The hub was created by a team of therapists, coaches, nutritionists, child behaviour experts and many more. It includes a wide range of useful resources; guides and videos and there are regular online talks with experts on topics related to parenting and professional development. Colleagues are also able to book a bimonthly online antenatal course designed to meet all the needs of expectant parents. To access the Parent cloud hub you will need to sign up. Simply click this [\[redacted\]](#) and enter your details to create a personalised account.

External resources - Employers for Carers (of which Ofcom are members) and Carers UK both offer a range of information and support resources for carers. For more information, please visit the links below.

- www.employersforcarers.org
- <https://www.carersuk.org/>

16. Related Policies

All Ofcom policies can be found [on the Hive](#). Below are the related policies mentioned in this policy.

- Parental Leave policy
- Shared Parental Leave policy
- Dignity and Respect at Work policy

17. Version history

Complete the table. Only include a brief summary of changes as fuller details will be recorded in the supporting paper to the approving Board / Committee.

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V 2.1	October 2020	Updated to reflect an increase to paternity paid leave to 4 weeks. [REDACTED]
V2.2	November 2021	Updated to reflect an increase to paternity paid leave to 8 weeks. [REDACTED]
V2.3	16 February 2022	Updated to reflect changes with standalone pregnancy loss support policy and neonatal leave and pay [REDACTED]
V3	08 March 2024	Amended to reflect the Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations; eight weeks can be taken in 2 blocks of any length within first 52 weeks from birth/adoption. [REDACTED]