



PATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

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hebridean housing
partnership

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Policy sets out paternity leave and pay entitlements and the procedure for employees to request such leave and pay. It is based on the statutory minimum requirements for paternity leave.
- 1.2 The two-week paternity leave period is known as paternity leave (PL).

INTRODUCTION TO PATERNITY LEAVE

- 1.3 We recognise that more and more employees want to be involved in supporting their partner around the time of their child's birth or, in the case of adoption, the child's placement. Paternity leave gives the employee the opportunity to both spend time with their partner and get to know their new child.
- 1.4 Employees who meet certain qualifying conditions have a statutory right to take two weeks paid leave on the birth or adoption of a child for which they have or expect to have responsibility. Both opposite sex and same-sex partners may be eligible.
- 1.5 The leave must be used to provide care and support to the mother/primary adopter and/or the child and not for any other purpose.

ELIGIBILITY

- 1.6 To be eligible for paternity leave (PL), the employee must have accrued a minimum of 26 weeks service by the end of the relevant week. From October 2026 employees will be eligible for Paternity Leave from day one of employment.
- 1.7 To be eligible for Occupational Paternity Pay (OPP) and Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), the employee's average weekly earnings over a certain eight-week period must be not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Contributions. Employees who earn less than this limit may still take PL, but they are not entitled to receive OPP or SPP. They must also meet certain notification requirements.
- 1.8 In the case of the birth of a child, the mother's partner may be eligible for paternity leave. In the case of adoption, the principal adopter's partner may be eligible. In both cases, the partner may be male or female.

PAY AND BENEFITS DURING PATERNITY LEAVE

- 1.9 For those who qualify, the two weeks of paternity leave will be with full pay (OPP).
- 1.10 Absence from work due to a period of PL does not affect the employee's entitlement to annual leave.
- 1.11 The employee's contract of employment with us continues in full throughout the period of PL with the exception of normal remuneration.

NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

- 1.12 Before taking PL, an eligible employee must give written notice of his intention to take PL by the end of the relevant week (for a newborn child) or within seven days of receiving notification of the child being matched with the adoptive parents. The Application for Paternity Leave should be used to provide notification.
- 1.13 To receive OPP and SPP, the employee must give at least 28 days' notice of the date on which he wants his OPP and/or SPP to begin. Once birth or placement has occurred, he should also inform Personnel section of the actual date of birth/placement, as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 1.14 An employee claiming OPP (and SPP) on the birth of a child must provide Personnel Section with a signed declaration that he:
- Is the baby's biological father, or is married to, is the partner/civil partner of the baby's mother (but not an immediate relative)
 - Has responsibility for the child's upbringing
 - Will take the leave to support the child and/or the child's mother
- 1.15 He must also set out:
- The date the baby is due (or the dates the baby was due/was born)
 - The date he wants the PL (and SPP period) to begin

- Whether he is claiming one or two weeks' PL
- 1.16 An employee claiming PL (and SPP) on the adoption of a child must provide Personnel section with a signed declaration that he:
- Is the Primary Adopter;
 - Is married to, the partner of, or the civil partner of the primary adopter
 - Will have responsibility for the child's upbringing
 - Will take the leave to support the child and/or the primary adopter
 - Wants to claim PL (and SPP) not statutory adoption leave and pay
- 1.17 He must also set out:
- The date his partner received notification of the match with the child
 - The date the child is expected to be/has been placed with them
 - The date he wants the PL (and SPP) to begin
 - Whether he is claiming one or two weeks PL
- 1.18 The actual date of childbirth/adoption placement can be difficult to predict. The employee can therefore choose to specify that the PL will commence:
- Immediately following the child's birth/placement, or a set number of days after the birth/placement (i.e. the baby's birth/placement triggers leave)
 - On a specified date
- 1.19 As the notification to take PL takes place relatively early before the birth/adoption, the employee may subsequently change his mind. In such circumstances, provided the initial notification criteria have been met, the employee may amend the date by providing the Personnel section with notice 28 days before the new date.

- 1.20 An employee may lose his entitlement to PL (and SPP) if he does not give the correct notice to the organisation.

LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 1.21 If you are eligible, you can take up to 2 weeks leave which can be taken in separate blocks of 1 week.
- 1.22 Leave cannot start before the birth and it must end within 52 weeks of the birth or placement.
- 1.23 In the sad event of a child being stillborn, the employee is still entitled to PL and OPP/SPP provided they meet the eligibility criteria.
- 1.24 In the case of adoptions, if an employee is told before their PL starts that the placement is not going ahead, they will not be entitled to PL. If the child has been placed and a disruption occurs to the placement (e.g. the child, for some reason, is returned to the adoption agency) the employee will still be entitled to paternity leave and OPP/SPP.

ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

- 1.25 Employees are entitled to take unpaid time off to accompany their partner at up to two antenatal appointments for a maximum of six and a half hours for each appointment.
- 1.26 The right applies to agency workers who have completed the 12-week qualifying period as well as to employees who are:
- The husband, civil partner or partner of a pregnant woman
 - The father or partner of an expected child
 - An intended parent in a surrogacy situation

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

- 1.27 This Policy will be reviewed every three years in line with the Policy Review Schedule.

INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
<i>HHP or Partnership</i>	Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board</i>	Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board Members</i>	All Members of the Board including co-opted Members
<i>Leave</i>	Leave is taken to mean both annual and public holiday entitlement subject to the statutory minimum
<i>Personnel Section</i>	Head of Executive Office and Chief Executive's Personal Assistant
<i>APL</i>	Additional Paternity Leave
<i>EWC</i>	Expected Week of Childbirth
<i>PL</i>	Paternity Leave
<i>OPP</i>	Occupational Paternity Pay
<i>SPP</i>	Statutory Paternity Pay
<i>Parent</i>	Includes biological and adoptive parents, as well as those who have acquired responsibility for a child, e.g. legal guardian or the new partner of a parent, provided they meet all the other eligibility criteria

SPL	Shared Parental Leave
<i>Relevant Week</i>	- For new-borns: the 15th week before the expected week of the child's birth - For adoptions from within the UK: the week in which the adoptive parents are told they have been matched with the child For adoptions from overseas: the week in which the adopter received official notification or the week at the end of which the employee has been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks, whichever is the later
All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender	

If there is a conflict between this Policy and any statutory provision or regulation, the latter shall prevail.



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