



SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE (ADOPTION) POLICY

Review Due:	December 2023 Please note that to support a realignment of policies review across the Trust, the Board of Trustees have approved an amendment to the review of this policy to take place in July 2023
Last Review	December 2020
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Reviewed By:	SP
Approved By:	Board of Trustees December 2020

Comments:

This policy has been drafted to set out the rights and entitlements Trust employees have to Shared Parental Leave (in the case of adoptive parents). It includes guidance for employees regarding eligibility and procedures and complies with all relevant government guidance. Draft approved by external HR Consultants.

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Introduction to shared parental leave

This policy sets out the rights of employees of The Partnership Trust ('the Trust') adopting a child to shared parental leave and pay. Shared parental leave is a type of leave that is available to employees having a child placed for adoption with them. Shared parental leave enables adopters to commit to ending their adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from adoption leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. The Trust provides a separate policy on shared parental leave for parents in a birth situation.

Shared parental leave should not be confused with ordinary parental leave, which is unaffected by shared parental leave. Ordinary parental leave is the entitlement to up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave. [The Trust provides a separate policy on ordinary parental leave entitled HR – Parental Leave Policy.]

The Trust recognises that, from time to time, employees may have questions or concerns relating to their shared parental leave rights. It is the Trust's policy to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. As the shared parental leave provisions are complex, if an employee wishes to take shared parental leave, they should clarify the relevant procedures with the HR department to ensure that they are followed correctly.

Data protection

When managing an employee's shared parental leave and pay, the Trust processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which an employee informs the Trust that they plan to take shared parental leave is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their shared parental leave and pay. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Trust's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

Definitions under this shared parental leave policy

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Adopter" means the person with whom the child is, or is expected to be, placed for adoption, or, in a case where two people have been matched jointly, whoever has elected to be the child's adopter for the purposes of adoption leave.

"Partner" means the person who is married to, or the civil partner or the partner of, the adopter at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, at the date on which the child enters Great Britain). This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Matched for adoption" means an adoption agency deciding that a person would be a suitable adoptive parent for a child either individually or jointly with another person. A person is notified of having been "matched for adoption" with a child on the date on which the person receives notification of the adoption agency's decision.

"Placed for adoption" means placed for adoption under UK adoption laws, including placement with a local authority foster parent who is also a prospective adopter ("foster to adopt").

"Official notification" means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant central authority, that it is prepared to issue a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of a child from overseas, or that it has issued a certificate and sent it to that authority, confirming, in either case, that the adopter is eligible to adopt, and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.

Scope of this shared parental leave policy

This policy applies in relation to employees of the Trust, whether they are the adopter or the partner. If it is the adopter who is employed by the Trust, their partner must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take shared parental leave set out in this policy to their own employer, which may have its own shared parental leave policy in place, if they want to take a period of shared parental leave.

Similarly, if it is the partner who is employed by the Trust, the adopter must (where relevant) submit any notifications to their own employer.

The adopter and the partner should ensure that they are each liaising with their own employer to ensure that requests for shared parental leave are handled as smoothly as possible.

Amount of shared parental leave available

The amount of shared parental leave to which an individual is entitled will depend on when the adopter brings their leave period to an end and the amount of leave that the other adoptive parent takes in respect of the child. Shared parental leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week. The employee can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block (in which case the Trust is required to accept the request as long as the employee meets the eligibility and notice requirements), or as a number of discontinuous blocks of leave (in which case the employee needs the Trust's agreement). A maximum of three requests for leave per adoption placement (regardless of the number of children who are placed as part of that placement) can normally be made by each adoptive parent.

The employee can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, at any time from the date on which the child enters Great Britain) or, where more than one child is placed for adoption through a single placement, the date of placement of the first child (for adoptions from overseas, at any time from the date on which the first child enters Great Britain). However, employees should bear in mind that the adopter's partner will lose their entitlement to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the adoption of their child if shared parental leave is taken first. The employee must take any shared parental leave within 52 weeks of the date on which the child is placed for adoption (for adoptions from overseas, within 52 weeks of the date on which the child enters Great Britain).

Eligibility for shared parental leave

For employees to be eligible to take shared parental leave, both adoptive parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

Adopter's eligibility for shared parental leave

The adopter is eligible for shared parental leave if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Trust until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- are entitled to statutory adoption leave in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant adoption leave curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory adoption leave), and shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the adopter to be eligible for shared parental leave, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which the child enters Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child.

Partner's eligibility for shared parental leave

The partner is eligible for shared parental leave if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with the Trust until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- has, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child; and
- complies with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible for shared parental leave, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which the child enters Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks;

- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- be entitled to statutory adoption leave or statutory adoption pay in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant adoption leave or pay curtailment requirements, or have returned to work before the end of statutory adoption leave.

Notice requirements for shared parental leave

The notices that the adoptive parents must give to the relevant employer to be able to take shared parental leave are made up of three elements. They are:

- an "adoption leave curtailment notice" from the adopter setting out when they propose to end their adoption leave (unless the adopter has already returned to work from adoption leave);
- a "notice of entitlement and intention" from the employee giving an initial, non-binding indication of each period of shared parental leave that they are requesting; and
- a "period of leave notice" from the employee setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave that they are requesting.

Forms to apply for Shared Parental Leave and Pay and provide notice of your leave dates can be downloaded [here](#).

The notice periods set out below (see Adopter's notice curtailing adoption leave, Employee's notice of entitlement and intention and Employee's period of leave notice) are the minimum required by law. However, the earlier the employee informs the Trust of their intentions, the more likely it is that the Trust will be able to accommodate the employee's wishes, particularly if they want to take periods of discontinuous leave.

Employees are advised that, if they have already decided the pattern of shared parental leave that they would like to take, they can provide more than one type of notice at the same time. For example, the adopter could provide an adoption leave curtailment notice, notice of entitlement and intention and period of leave notice at the same time. Similarly, the partner could provide their notice of entitlement and intention and period of leave notice at the same time.

Adopter's notice curtailing adoption leave

Before the adopter or partner can take shared parental leave, the adopter must either return to work before the end of their adoption leave (by giving the required eight weeks' notice of their planned return) or provide their employer with an adoption leave curtailment notice. The adoption leave curtailment notice must be in writing and state the date on which adoption leave is to end. That date must be at least:

- two weeks after the first day of the adopter's ordinary adoption leave period;
- eight weeks after the date on which the adopter gave the adoption leave curtailment notice to their employer; and
- one week before what would be the end of the additional adoption leave period.

The adopter must provide their adoption leave curtailment notice at the same time they provide either their notice of entitlement and intention or a declaration of consent and entitlement signed

by the adopter confirming that their partner has given their employer a notice of entitlement and intention (see Employee's notice of entitlement and intention below).

Revocation of adoption leave curtailment notice

The adopter can withdraw their notice curtailing their adoption leave in limited circumstances. The withdrawal of an adoption leave curtailment notice must be in writing and can be given only if the adopter has not returned to work. The adopter can withdraw their adoption leave curtailment notice if:

- it is discovered that neither the adopter nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and the adopter withdraws their adoption leave curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given; or
- the partner has died.

Employee's notice of entitlement and intention

The employee, whether the adopter or the partner, must provide the Trust with a non-binding notice of entitlement and intention. The employee's notice of entitlement and intention, which must be in writing and provided at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave to be taken by the employee, must set out the following information.

If the employee is the adopter, the notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the adopter's name;
- the partner's name;
- the start and end dates of any statutory adoption leave taken or to be taken by the adopter;
- the total amount of shared parental leave available;
- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or receives official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption with the adopter and the date of the placement, or the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas (although, if the child has not yet been placed for adoption or entered Great Britain, the date of placement for adoption or entry into Great Britain must be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after the placement or entry, and before the first period of shared parental leave to be taken by the adopter);
- how much shared parental leave the adopter and partner each intend to take; and
- a non-binding indication as to when the employee intends to take shared parental leave (including the start and end dates for each period of leave).

The adopter's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by them that:

- they satisfy, or will satisfy, the eligibility requirements to take shared parental leave;
- the information they give in the notice of entitlement and intention is accurate; and
- they will immediately inform the Trust if they cease to care for the child.

In addition, the adopter's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by their partner:

- specifying the partner's name, address, and national insurance number (or declaring that the partner does not have a national insurance number);

- declaring that the partner satisfies, or will satisfy, the conditions set out above (see Adopter's eligibility for shared parental leave);
- declaring that the partner is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of, the adopter;
- declaring that the partner consents to the amount of leave that the adopter intends to take; and
- declaring that the partner consents to the adopter's employer processing the information in the partner's declaration.

If the employee is the partner, the partner's notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the partner's name;
- the adopter's name;
- the start and end dates of any periods of statutory adoption leave or statutory adoption pay taken or to be taken by the adopter;
- the total amount of shared parental leave available;
- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or receives official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- where statutory adoption leave was not taken, or is not to be taken, the start and end dates of any period in which statutory adoption pay is paid or payable;
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption with the adopter and the date of the placement, or the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain in relation to an adoption from overseas (although, if the child has not yet been placed for adoption or entered Great Britain, the date of placement for adoption or entry into Great Britain must be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after the placement or entry, and before the first period of shared parental leave to be taken by the adopter);
- how much shared parental leave the partner and adopter each intend to take; and
- a non-binding indication as to when the partner intends to take shared parental leave (including the start and end dates for each period of leave).

The partner's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by them that:

- they satisfy, or will satisfy, the eligibility requirements to take shared parental leave;
- the information given by the partner in the notice of entitlement and intention is accurate;
- they are married to, or the civil partner or the partner of the adopter; and
- they will immediately inform the Trust if they cease to care for the child or if the adopter informs them that they no longer meet the requirement to have curtailed their adoption leave or pay period.

In addition, the partner's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by the adopter:

- specifying the adopter's name, address, and national insurance number (or declaring that the adopter does not have a national insurance number);
- declaring that the adopter satisfies, or will satisfy, the conditions set out above (see Partner's eligibility for shared parental leave);
- declaring that the adopter consents to the amount of leave that the partner intends to take;
- declaring that they will immediately inform the employee if they no longer meet the requirement to have curtailed their adoption leave or pay period; and
- declaring that the adopter consents to the partner's employer processing the information in the adopter's declaration.

Within 14 days of receiving a notice of entitlement and intention from the employee, whether the adopter or partner, the Trust can request from the employee:

- in relation to adoptions within the UK, documentary evidence from the adoption agency of:
 - the name and address of the adoption agency;
 - the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child; and
 - the date on which the adoption agency expects the child to be placed for adoption with the adopter; and
- in relation to adoptions from overseas, a copy of the official notification; and
- whether a UK or overseas adoption, the name and address of the other adoptive parent's employer (or a declaration that the other adoptive parent has no employer).

The employee has 14 days from the date of the request to send the Trust the required information.

Variation or cancellation of notice of entitlement and intention

The employee can vary or cancel their proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a notice of entitlement and intention, provided that they provide the Trust with a written notice. The written notice must contain:

- an indication as to when the employee intends to take shared parental leave (including the start and end dates for each period of leave);
- details of any periods of shared parental leave that have been notified through a period of leave notice;
- details of any periods of statutory shared parental pay that have been notified in relation to periods where shared parental leave was not to be taken; and
- a declaration signed by the adopter and the partner that they agree the variation.

Any indication of leave intended to be taken that the employee provides in a variation of notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until they provide a period of leave notice in relation to that period of leave. There is no limit on the number of variations of notice of entitlement and intention that the employee can make.

Employee's period of leave notice

To take a period of shared parental leave, the employee must provide the Trust with a written notice setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave requested in that notice.

A period of leave notice must be given not less than eight weeks before the start date of the first period of shared parental leave requested in the notice. The notice may be given at the same time as a notice of entitlement and intention and can be a request for a continuous period of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

Variation or cancellation of period of leave notice

The employee can vary or cancel their proposed shared parental leave dates following the submission of a period of leave notice, provided that they provide their employer with a written notice not less than eight weeks before any period of leave varied by the notice is due to commence. The written notice can:

- vary the start date or the end date of any period of shared parental leave or cancel a request for leave;
- request that a continuous period of leave become discontinuous periods of leave; or
- request that discontinuous periods of leave become a continuous period of leave.

Limit on number of requests for leave

The employee can provide a combined total of up to three period of leave notices or variations of period of leave notices per adoption, although the Trust may waive this limit in some circumstances.

Continuous period of shared parental leave

If the employee submits a period of leave notice requesting one continuous period of leave, they will be entitled to take that period of leave.

Discontinuous periods of shared parental leave

The employee may submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. For example, the adopter and partner could request a pattern of leave from their respective employers that allows them to alternate childcare responsibilities.

If the employee submits a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, the Trust, in the two weeks beginning with the date the period of leave notice was given, can:

- consent to the pattern of leave requested;
- propose an alternative pattern of leave; or
- refuse the pattern of leave requested.

If agreement is reached within those two weeks, the employee is entitled to take the leave on the dates agreed.

If no agreement has been reached within that two-week discussion period, the employee is entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of leave. In that event, the employee must choose a start date for the leave that is at least eight weeks from the date on which the period of leave notice was originally given. The employee must notify the Trust of that date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period. If the employee does not choose a start date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period, the period of continuous leave will start on the date of the first period of leave requested in the period of leave notice.

Alternatively, if the Trust has refused the request or no agreement has been reached during the two-week discussion period, the employee may withdraw a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. The employee can withdraw a period of leave notice at any time on or before the 15th day after the period of leave notice was given. A notice for discontinuous leave that has been withdrawn before it is agreed does not count towards the total number of requests for leave that an employee can make.

Amount of shared parental pay available

Statutory shared parental pay is available for eligible adoptive parents to share between them while on shared parental leave. The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available to the adoptive parents will depend on how much statutory adoption pay the adopter has been paid when

their adoption pay period ends. A total of 39 weeks' statutory adoption pay is available to the adopter. As adoption leave cannot be curtailed for the first two weeks of leave, an adopter can share up to 37 weeks' statutory shared parental pay with their partner.

Any statutory shared parental pay due during shared parental leave will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

It is up to the adoptive parents as to who is paid any statutory shared parental pay and how it is apportioned between them.

Eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

For employees to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, both adoptive parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

Adopter's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

The adopter is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with their employer until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which they receive statutory shared parental pay; and
- are entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced.

In addition, for the adopter to be eligible for statutory shared parental pay, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child.

Partner's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

The partner is eligible for statutory shared parental pay if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the end of the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) and remain in continuous employment with their employer until the week before any period of shared parental leave that they take;
- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or by the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas) of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the adopter, for the care of the child; and
- are absent from work and intends to care for the child during each week in which they receive statutory shared parental pay.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible, the adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the week in which the adopter is notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (or the week in which they receive official notification in relation to an adoption from overseas);
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date on which the child is placed for adoption (or enters Great Britain if the child is being adopted from overseas), the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child; and
- be entitled to statutory adoption pay in respect of the child, but the adoption pay period has been reduced.

Rights during shared parental leave

During shared parental leave, all terms and conditions of the employee's contract except normal pay will continue. Salary will be replaced by statutory shared parental pay if the employee is eligible for it.

This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement will continue to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Contact during shared parental leave

The Trust reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with employees during shared parental leave. This may be to discuss employees' plans for their return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence.

An employee can agree to work for the Trust (or to attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave without that work bringing the period of their shared parental leave and pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

The Trust has no right to require employees to carry out any work and employees have no right to undertake any work during their shared parental leave. Any work undertaken, and the amount of salary paid for any work done on SPLIT days, is entirely a matter for agreement between employees and the Trust.

If you are entitled to receive statutory shared parental pay for any week during which you attend work for SPLIT days, you will still receive this in the usual way. In addition, we will also pay you for each hour that you work during a SPLIT day.

Returning to work following shared parental leave

The employee has the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory adoption leave or statutory paternity leave taken by the employee in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

If the employee is returning to work from shared parental leave and the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory adoption or paternity leave taken in relation to the same child, or was the last of two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave that included a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks, or a period of additional adoption leave or additional maternity leave, the employee has the right to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable. In these circumstances, if it is not reasonably practicable for the Trust to permit a return to the same job, the employee has the right to return to another job that is suitable and appropriate for them.