



HR: SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE (BIRTH) POLICY

Review Due:	July 2026
Last Review:	June 2023
Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Reviewed By:	EH
Approved By:	Executive Board
Date of Approval:	October 2023

Comments:

This policy has been drafted to set out the rights and entitlements Trust employees have to Shared Parental Leave. It includes guidance for employees regarding eligibility and procedures and complies with all relevant government guidance.

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1. Introduction to Shared Parental Leave

This policy sets out the rights of employees within The Partnership Trust ('The Trust') to shared parental leave and pay following the birth of a child. (The Trust provides a separate policy on shared parental leave for employees who are adopting children.)

Shared parental leave should not be confused with ordinary parental leave, which is a separate 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.

2. Data Protection

When managing an employee's shared parental leave and pay, the Trust processes personal data collected in accordance with its GDPR and 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.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Mother" means the mother or expectant mother of the child.

"Partner" means the father of the child, or the person who, at the date of the child's birth, is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of the mother. This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the mother's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

"Expected week of childbirth" means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the mother's doctor or midwife expects them to give birth.

4. Scope

This policy applies in relation to employees of the Trust, whether they are the mother or the partner. It does not apply to workers, contractors, volunteers or interns working for the organisation.

The policy does not form part of a contract of employment and the Trust reserves the right to amend it at any time.

5. How does shared parental leave work

Shared parental leave enables a mother to end their adoption leave early and share the remaining weeks of leave with a partner. It is aimed at giving parents more flexibility over how they share childcare between them during the first year of their child's adoption.

Shared parental leave can be taken at the same time as an eligible mother/partner or separately.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

An employee can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block, in which case the Trust must accept the request as long as the employee is entitled to shared parental leave and meets the notice requirements. Alternatively, the employee can request to take shared parental leave in a number of discontinuous blocks of leave, separated by periods of work, in which case the employee may need the agreement of the Trust.

6. Amount of shared parental leave available

The amount of shared parental leave that can be split between the mother and their partner is 52 weeks, minus the amount of maternity leave taken by the mother.

If the employee is the mother, she must take compulsory maternity leave immediately after the child is born. This means that the mother cannot start shared parental leave until two weeks after the birth of her child.

If the employee is the partner, they can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date of the child's birth. However, they are entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the birth of their child, which they will lose if shared parental leave is taken first.

All shared parental leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks following the birth of the child.

7. Eligibility for shared parental leave

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

Mother's eligibility for shared parental leave

The mother is eligible for shared parental leave if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the Trust ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth 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 of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- are entitled to statutory maternity leave in respect of the child; and
- have brought their statutory maternity leave to an end by giving a maternity leave curtailment notice (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave), and
- have complied with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements as set out in this policy.

In addition, for the mother 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 expected week of childbirth;
- 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 of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, 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 with the Trust ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth 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 of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child; and
- comply with the relevant shared parental leave notice and evidence requirements as set out in this policy.

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

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child;
- be entitled to statutory maternity leave, statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child; and
- comply with the relevant maternity leave or pay curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave).

8. Notice requirements for shared parental leave

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

- a "maternity leave curtailment notice" from the mother setting out when they propose to end their maternity leave (unless the mother has already returned to work from maternity 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 Mother's notice curtailing maternity 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 mother could provide a maternity 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.

Mother's notice curtailing maternity leave

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

- after the compulsory maternity leave period, which is the two weeks after birth;
- at least eight weeks after the date on which the mother gave the maternity leave curtailment notice to their employer; and
- at least one week before what would be the end of the additional maternity leave period.

The mother must provide their maternity 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 mother 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 maternity leave curtailment notice

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

- it is discovered that neither the mother nor the partner are entitled to shared parental leave or statutory shared parental pay and the mother withdraws their maternity leave curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given;
- the maternity leave curtailment notice was given before the birth of the child and the mother withdraws their maternity leave curtailment notice within six weeks of the child's birth; or
- the partner has died.

Should a mother wish to revoke / withdraw their curtailment notice, please speak with the Trust HR department in the first instance.

Employee's notice of entitlement and intention

The employee, whether the mother 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 mother, the notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the mother's name;
- the partner's name;
- the start and end dates of any statutory maternity leave taken or to be taken by the mother;
- the total amount of shared parental leave available;
- the child's expected week of birth and the child's date of birth (although, if the child has not yet been born, the date of birth can be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after birth, and before the first period of shared parental leave to be taken by the mother);
- how much shared parental leave the mother 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 mother'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 mother'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 Mother's eligibility for shared parental leave);
- declaring that the partner is the father of the child, or is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of, the mother;
- declaring that the partner consents to the amount of leave that the mother intends to take; and
- declaring that the partner consents to the mother'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 mother's name;
- the start and end dates of any periods of statutory maternity leave, statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance taken or to be taken by the mother;
- the total amount of shared parental leave available;
- the child's expected week of birth and the child's date of birth (although, if the child has not yet been born, the date of birth can be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after birth, and before the first period of shared parental leave to be taken by the partner);
- how much shared parental leave the partner and mother 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 the partner 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; and
- they will immediately inform the Trust if they cease to care for the child or if the mother informs them that they no longer meets the requirement to have curtailed their maternity leave or pay period.

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

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

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

- a copy of the child's birth certificate (or, if the child has not been born, a copy of the birth certificate within 14 days of the birth - if the birth certificate has yet to be issued after this period, a signed declaration stating the date and location of the child's birth will suffice); and
- the name and address of the other parent's employer (or a declaration that the other 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 mother and the partner that they agree to 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 or cancelled 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 pregnancy, although the Trust may waive this limit in some circumstances.

9. 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 as long as they are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements.

10. Discontinuous periods of shared parental leave

The employee may submit a period of leave notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work. For example, the mother 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.

11. Amount of shared parental pay available

Statutory shared parental pay is available for eligible parents to share between them while on shared parental leave. The number of weeks' statutory shared parental pay available to the parents will depend on how much statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance the mother has been paid when their maternity leave or pay period ends.

A total of 39 weeks' statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance is available to the mother. As there is a compulsory maternity leave period of two weeks [or four weeks for factory workers], this means that a mother who ends their maternity leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' statutory shared parental pay with their partner [35 weeks' statutory shared parental pay can be shared if the mother is a factory worker] (although it will normally be less than this because of the maternity leave that mothers usually take before the birth).

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

12. Eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

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

Mother's eligibility for statutory shared parental pay

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

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the Trust ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with the Trust until the week before any period of shared parental pay that they get;

- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, 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 maternity pay in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period has been reduced; and
- have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, for the mother 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 expected week of childbirth;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child; and
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks.

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 with the Trust ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with the Trust until the week before any period of shared parental pay that they get;
- have normal weekly earnings for eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, 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
- have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

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

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth;
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold [currently £30] for any 13 of those 66 weeks;
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child; and
- be entitled to statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period or maternity allowance period has been reduced.

13. 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, except for any periods of unpaid shared parental leave.

14. 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.

15. Shared parental leave in touch days

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.

SPLIT days are in addition to the ten keeping in touch days available to a mother during maternity leave.

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.

16. 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 maternity 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 maternity 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 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.