



Paternity / Partner Leave Policy

Effective from October 2021

About to welcome a new child? Congratulations!

We can't tell you everything you'll need to know about parenthood but here are the main things in relation to work.

Throughout this policy, when we refer to 'paternity/partner leave' or 'paternity pay', this is applicable for any parent eligible for this type of leave (refer to Section 2: Eligibility) and includes co-parents irrespective of their gender/sex.

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1. Time off work

Colleagues can take up to 4 weeks' paternity/partner leave with Occupational Paternity Pay (**full pay inclusive of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)**). We encourage all colleagues to take full advantage of this time.

If you would like more time with your new child you could also take annual leave and/or up to 4 weeks' parental leave. You will need to agree this with your line manager in the normal way.

If you become a parent to more than one child at the same time, either through birth or adoption, the length of time off that you can take doesn't change. Leave cannot start before the birth of a child and the start of your paternity/partner leave can be from:

- The day of your child's birth or placement
- An agreed number of days/ weeks after the date of your child's birth or placement

For births or overseas adoption, leave must finish within 56 days of the birth (or due date if the baby is early) or date of the placement. If, for some reason, you want to change the date you start your time off, that's fine – discuss it with your line manager and it will then be confirmed in a letter (you will need to give 28 days' notice of any changes).

We know that babies don't always arrive when expected - if your baby / adopted baby is premature (born before 37 weeks gestation), you will receive paid compassionate leave to cover an additional 2-

week period on top of your paternity pay. Please read the additional information below under the section on 'Dealing with the unexpected'.

2. Eligibility

You are entitled to Paternity/Partner Leave if:

- you are the biological/adoptive father of the child, or the birth parent/adopter's husband, partner or civil partner irrespective of sex/gender
- you have, or are expected to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing
- you take the leave to care for the child and birth parent/adopter
- you have completed a self-certificate if you are eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay (SC3 for the father/birth parent/partner or SC4 for the partner of the adoptive parent)
- you have given the necessary notice of when you plan to start your time off, which is at least 15 weeks before the baby is due or within 7 days of being matched with a child for adoption.

We treat all colleagues fairly and equally, regardless of your type of contract (i.e. fixed term or open), in the same way with respect to paternity/partner leave and pay. There are some funding bodies that are prepared to suspend or extend grants to allow for paternity/partner leave. To find out if this is the case, please first contact your line manager and then consult your local People Services colleagues.

3. Pay whilst you are off

We are delighted to say that regardless of your length of service, you will receive occupational paternity/partner pay (OPP) for the 4 weeks of your leave. We are one of the few universities that pay no attention to how long you have worked for us when accessing these benefits.

For the University to be able to claim the statutory element of OPP, you must:

- Earn on average an amount at least equal to the **Lower Earnings Limit**. The Lower Earnings Limit is an amount set by the Inland Revenue to determine whether someone has enough National Insurance contributions to be eligible for statutory pay (Section 10: Associated documents)
- Have worked for the University continuously for at least 26 weeks continuing into the 15th week before your baby is due or by the 'matching week'.
- Give the **correct notice**

However, even if we are not able to claim the statutory element of OPP, you will still receive occupational paternity/partner pay (OPP) for the 4 weeks of your leave.

Paternity/Partner Leave can start upon the birth of the baby OR on the date of the child's placement in the case of adoption. It can start on any day of the week. This special time will be taken:

- Within the first 8 weeks of the child's birth OR placement (paternity/partner leave must not go past the end of the 8th week)
- In whole, consecutive weeks, not as odd days or separate weeks

The University appreciates that things do not always go to plan – for example, babies do not always arrive when they are expected and children are not always placed according to planned dates. If changes need to be made to the paternity/partner leave dates we'd ask that you inform your line manager and local People Services Team.

We ask colleagues to request paternity/partner leave as soon as practically possible and ideally at least 15 weeks before the baby is due OR 28 days before the child is due to be placed in the case of adoption. Whilst we will be as flexible as possible, if your request is later than this, your manager may request you reschedule your leave within the first 8 weeks following your child's birth or placement.

4. Before your baby/child arrives

Appointments

We want colleagues to enjoy the whole experience of preparing for a new arrival and you can take paid time off to attend antenatal appointments or adoption appointments. Let your line manager know as soon as your appointments are booked so they can make arrangements for you to take the time off.

As with all medical appointments, such appointments often do not take an entire day and we would encourage colleagues to be reasonable in the amount of time they take off and, where possible, to arrange these appointments at times which would cause least disruption to your work.

5. After your baby/child arrives

Dealing with the unexpected

Every pregnancy / adoption is different. If your baby is born early, we'd ask you to please inform us of the date of the birth as soon as possible. You can choose to take paternity/partner leave from any time between the actual date of birth and the end of an 8-week period running from the Sunday of the week the baby was originally due.

As mentioned previously, if your baby/adoptive baby is born before 37 weeks gestation, based on the due date, you are entitled to 2 weeks' paid compassionate leave. This leave can be taken anytime from the end of paternity/partner leave until your baby's first birthday and may be taken in a block or individual days throughout this period. We'd ask you to inform your line manager with as much notice as practicable when you wish to take compassionate leave, which will allow the People Services Team to process this.

We want to be as supportive as possible throughout your journey of parenthood and will also fully support your attendance at relevant medical appointments as a result of your baby's premature birth during your baby's 1st year. These will of course be paid time off.

Sadly, not all pregnancies end in a live birth. We want to support you if this happens to you and to give you time needed to grieve and recover. Here, we are referring to a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, stillbirth or death following a birth.

In the sad circumstance where your partner experiences pregnancy loss at any point during their first 24 weeks of pregnancy, you are entitled to up to two weeks bereavement leave on full pay. If the

miscarriage or stillbirth occurs after the 24th week of pregnancy you are entitled to paternity/partner leave and pay as outlined above. You may also find it useful to speak to someone who is specially trained and there are a list of specialist organisations in Section 10: Associated documents. You may also access our confidential counselling service via the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#). EAP is free and easy to access and is available online or on the telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In the case of adoption, in the unfortunate circumstances where the placement does not take place you would not be entitled to paternity/partner leave. If the placement is ended while you are on paternity/partner leave you can continue to take your paternity/partner leave as agreed.

Failed pregnancy or unsuccessful IVF treatment

A failed pregnancy or unsuccessful IVF treatment can be an upsetting experience. It is easy to forget to look after yourself when you are trying to support others through this time. If this is the case, it is important to reach out for support as soon as possible. [NICE guidelines](#) recommend that counselling should be offered before, during and after IVF treatments, regardless of the outcome. For 24/7 confidential and professional counselling for colleagues **and** immediate family, visit the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) or access [peer support groups](#).

Annual Leave

Annual leave accrues as normal during paternity/partner leave. Annual leave may be taken immediately prior to, or immediately following paternity/partner leave by agreement with your manager.

You are also entitled to be credited for Bank Holidays and University Closure Days that fall on your normal days of work during your paternity/partner leave.

To determine the time you will be credited, we have an [annual leave calculator](#) to total the number of Bank Holidays and Closure Day days/hours that fall on your normal days of work during your paternity/partner leave. We ask that these days/hours be taken at the end of your paternity/partner leave period before returning to work.

The University treats all colleagues equally with respect to paternity/partner leave and paternity pay regardless of their type of contract, i.e. fixed-term or open ended.

Any enhancements or awards due whilst you are on paternity/partner leave will be considered in the usual way and pro-rated appropriately based on the time you were at work.

Shared Parental Leave

You may be eligible to take shared parental leave and share your time off and pay with your partner. Please see the [shared parental leave policy](#) for more details.

6. Pensions

Pension membership and contributions are an important consideration when going on paternity/partner leave. If you are a member of Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)/Retirement Benefits Plan (RBP)/National Health Service (NHS) Pensions Scheme on a contributory basis, or a member of Nest Pensions, contributions to the fund are made by both you and the University throughout the period of paternity/partner leave. Your contributions are based on your actual pay received for the pay period (including Statutory Paternity Pay); the University will

contribute the balance required to ensure you continue to accrue pension benefits as though you were working at your normal pay rate.

If you are a Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)/Retirement Benefits Plan (RBP) Pensions+ member you will continue with your pensions salary sacrifice during the period of paternity/partner leave, provided your reference salary is not reduced below the National Minimum/Living Wage. Salary sacrifices can't be made against statutory payments such as Statutory Paternity Pay so the sacrifice will only apply to your University Paternity Pay at full salary. Further information is available from the appropriate Payroll and Pensions colleagues.

7. Returning to work

Whilst returning to work may be the last thing on your mind, we do look forward to welcoming you back to work and will presume you are going to return to work on the date stated on your [Paternity/Partner leave request form](#). If you are going to return to work on this date, then we do not require any further notification from you.

8. Associated Documents

- [Statutory Paternity Pay](#)
- [Lower earnings limit](#)
- [Correct notice](#)
- [Annual leave calculator](#)
- [Shared parental leave policy](#)
- [National Minimum/Living Wage](#)
- [The Miscarriage Association](#) offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy, and works to raise awareness and promote good practice in medical care.
- [SANDS](#) offers support if your baby dies during pregnancy or after birth, and also run a helpline.
- [Tommy's](#) is a charity that funds research into pregnancy problems but also provides information for parents-to-be.
- [Paternity/Partner leave request form](#)
- [Paternity/Partner leave toolkit](#)

Document Control Information		
Does this replace another policy? Yes		
Approval		
Approved by: People Matters Group		Date: 8.7.21
Effective from: October 2021		
Review date: October 2023		
Responsibilities		
Executive Sponsor: Adrienne McFarland, Executive Director of People Services		
Policy Owner: Kate Smith, People Relations and Policy Manager		
Person(s) responsible for compliance:		
Consultation		
Version	Body consulted	Date
1	EDI Leads Forum	May 2021
2	People Policy Forum	June 2021
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Analysis:		
Does the policy have the potential to impact on people in a different way because of their protected characteristics?		
Initial assessment by: Renita Barbour		Date: May 2021
Key changes as a result of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Analysis		
Document location		
https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/docs/HR%20Policies/Forms/Policies.aspx		