

Paternity leave policy

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Version history

This policy was formerly part of the Work and Parents Policy, which was:

- First approved by Finance & Human Resources Committee 08.10.02
- Update approved by Finance & Human Resources Committee 11.06.03
- Updated March 2004 following consultation with the unions
- Updated October 2006 to incorporate the Work & Families Act 2006 (effective 1 October 2006)
- Updated August 2008 to clarify the position regarding statutory and occupational annual leave entitlements during maternity leave (Section 5.1 in maternity leave section). 4.1.6, 5.3.2 and 5.6.4 in maternity leave section also updated. Updates also reflected in Adoption policy.
- Updated October 2008 - update to Section 1; update titles under H&S Section; clarification on the calculation for statutory maternity pay; update to 5.1.1; update to 5.3.2; and update to titles under 5.6.4. Updates also reflected in Adoption policy.
- Updated March 2009 to reflect the proposed increase in statutory annual leave from April 2009 and sections 3.1 and 3.8 of the Parental leave section (18 weeks for each disabled child)
- Updated July 2009 to include additional text under section 5.1
- Updated August 2010 – update to Appendix 1 regarding continuous service
- Updated February 2011 (section 2.3)

This separate Paternity Leave Policy was finalised in June 2013 following consultation with the unions.

August 2014 updates: 'co-adopter' added to 1.2; 'fathers' removed from 2.1 (b), 2.1.1 and 3.2 (b).

December 2014: Updated to reflect Shared parental leave legislation, including removal of additional paternity leave

November 2016: terminology updates

February 2018: terminology updates

April 2019: updated to ensure inclusive and gender neutral

July 2019: Reviewed by Stonewall

September 2019: Paternity leave increased from two to four weeks

June 2021: Added Section 4

July 2021: Policy updates agreed with our recognised trade unions

June 2022: Updated to improve gender neutrality and inclusivity and to reflect the full spectrum of identities

July 2022: updates approved by SLT

October 2023: Terminology updated to be more inclusive

October 2023: SLT approved changes implemented to increase Paternity leave from four to eight weeks

April 2024: Updated to incorporate the Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SLT approved 19.3.24)

April 2025: Updated to incorporate the new HR system and update

June 2026: Notice requirements for Statutory paternity pay clarified and Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026 incorporated

Paternal leave policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Paternal leave is up to eight weeks paid leave to allow the other birth/first parent¹ or other adopter² to help care for a child or help support the parent or adopter who has already taken leave, after a child's birth or adoption placement.

This policy applies to all members of staff regardless of their gender or the gender of their partner, is inclusive of couples, regardless of gender, and is intended to be gender neutral.

Staff are advised to read this policy in conjunction with the Shared Parental Leave Policy.

- 1.2 This policy applies to all staff who have a current contract of employment with London Metropolitan University that covers the period of time that they intend to take paternal leave.
- 1.3 If a member of staff's contract of employment ends whilst they are taking leave, contractual benefits above statutory entitlements will end on the date that the staff member's contract of employment ends. Statutory payments will however be paid until the end date of statutory leave entitlement.

2. Paternal Leave

2.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for paternal leave a member of staff must have or expect to have main responsibility (with the child's birth/first parent, co-adopter or adopter) for a child's upbringing and be either:

- a) the biological parent of the child or the spouse³, civil partner⁴ or partner of the child's biological parent, or
- b) in the case of adoption, the spouse, partner or civil partner

The member of staff must be taking paternal leave either to support the birth/first parent or adopter or to care for the new baby or newly adopted child.

Members of staff are obliged to comply with the notice requirements (paragraph 2.4 refers) and complete a Paternal Leave Declaration and Request via the HR system (paragraph 2.5 refers) as confirmation that they meet the eligibility conditions for paternal leave.

¹ This includes all couples regardless of gender and is intended to be gender neutral and inclusive

² This includes adopters, regardless of gender and is intended to be gender neutral and inclusive

³ This includes spouses regardless of gender and is intended to be gender neutral and inclusive

2.1.1 Entitlement

The university offers eligible staff a total of eight weeks paid paternity leave to eligible staff, regardless of length of service. The eight weeks include the statutory entitlement to two weeks' paternity leave.

Eligible staff are required to provide a self-certificate (paragraph 2.5 refers) confirming that they meet the eligibility conditions for paternity leave set out in 2.1.

2.2 Duration of paternity leave

2.2.1 Statutory paternity leave⁵

Eligible members of staff, who provide the required notice and evidence are entitled to take two non-consecutive weeks' or two consecutive weeks statutory paternity leave at any point in the first 52 weeks after the child's birth or adoption placement,

Statutory Paternity leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth or placement.

2.2.2 Occupational paternity leave

In addition to Statutory paternity leave, eligible members of staff are also entitled to take a further six weeks' paid occupational paternity leave, which they can take in any way that they choose within the first year after the baby's birth or adoption. This could, for example, be in one or more blocks or in separate days.

Only one allocation of paternity leave will be available to members of staff irrespective of whether more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy, or, in the case of adoptive placements, irrespective of whether more than one child is placed together.

Both statutory and occupational paternity leave and/or pay are subject to the eligibility, notice and evidence requirements set out in this policy.

2.3 Paternity pay

Paternity pay, which is subject to the same types of pay deductions as normal salary payments, consists of up to a total of eight weeks full normal weekly pay, depending on how the member of staff chooses to take the latter six weeks (see 2.2 above). In the case of members of staff with irregular earnings, such as Associate Lecturers, or some casual members of staff, entitlement to paternity pay will be calculated on the basis of the member of staff's average weekly earnings in accordance with applicable statutory provisions.

⁵ The legal minimum entitlements to leave under UK employment law

2.4 Notice of intention to take paternity leave and employee declaration

2.4.1 Statutory paternity leave

Members of staff are required to inform the university of their intention to take statutory paternity leave:

- no later than the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC), unless this is not reasonably practicable; or
- within seven days of being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Following the above notification, colleagues are then required to provide at least 28 days advance notice of the dates on which they wish to take the leave, unless this is not reasonably practicable

2.4.2 Occupational paternity leave

As with statutory paternity leave, members of staff are asked to please inform the university of their intention to take occupational paternity leave:

- by the end of the fifteenth week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable; or
- within seven days of being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Colleagues will need to inform their line manager (copying in their HR contact) of the following:

- the week the baby is due, or for adoptive parents⁶, the week when the child is expected to be placed and the date on which they were notified of having been matched with the child; and
- the dates on which when they wish to take their paternity leave.

Members of staff will be able to change their mind about the date on which they would like their paternity leave to start providing they tell their line manager (copying in their HR contact) at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

2.4.3 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave⁷

i) Entitlements

Colleagues are advised to read this section in conjunction with the bereavement leave section of our Special Leave policy, which provides

⁶ This includes adoptive parents regardless of gender and is intended to be gender neutral and inclusive

⁷ The Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026 take effect from 6 April 2026

time off to staff for a bereavement. Colleagues might also wish to review the provisions in our Shared Parental Leave policy and our Parental Leave policy.

In the tragic event that a child's 'primary carer' dies within 52 weeks of their child's birth or adoption placement, eligible staff can take up to 52 weeks unpaid Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave (BPPL) to care for the child.

A child's primary carer usually includes the child's mother (in a birth case) or the child's adopter. However, this policy applies to all members of staff, regardless of their gender or the gender of their partner, is inclusive of couples, regardless of gender and is intended to be gender neutral.

ii) Eligibility

To be eligible, the member of staff must be the child's father or other birth parent (immediately before the death of the child's mother or other birth parent) have been married to, or the civil partner or partner of, the child's mother or adopter, with the main responsibility for the child's upbringing.

The purpose of the bereaved partner's paternity leave must be for the purpose of caring for the child.

The period of eligibility to take BPPL is, in the majority of cases, a single period of unpaid leave that must be taken within 52 weeks of:

- the date of the child's birth;
- the date of the child's adoption placement; or
- (for overseas adoptions) the date of the child's entry to Great Britain.

If, however, the date on which the child's primary carer dies is less than 14 days before the end of the 52 weeks (the eligibility period), the BPPL eligibility period ends 14 days after the bereavement date.

iii) Notice requirements

Acas guidance⁸ suggests that the member of staff taking the leave should tell their employer as soon as they can.

Whilst the formal notice to take leave must come from the employee themselves, Acas suggest that employers should be flexible and compassionate and allow someone else to tell them about the death, for example, a friend or family member.

⁸ Bereaved partner's paternity leave

a) Less than 8 weeks after the death

If it is less than 8 weeks since their spouse, civil partner or partner's death:

- the leave can start straight away if needed they can tell their employer verbally or in writing, for example a letter or email; and
- they must tell their employer before they're due to start work that day

HR will confirm this in writing, for example, in a letter or email.

b) More than eight weeks after the death of the spouse, civil partner or partner's death

If it is more than eight weeks since the death they must give at least one week's notice before they start the leave and they must tell their employer in writing,

iv) What information does the member of staff need to share?

Acas guidance⁹ suggests that the member of staff must provide:

- the date their spouse, civil partner or partner died;
- the date they will start bereaved partner's paternity leave;
- for birth and surrogacy: the date of the child's birth
- for UK adoptions: the date the adoption placement started
- for overseas adoptions: the date the child entered Great Britain.

If it is less than eight weeks since the death, Acas suggests that the member of staff must also say how much leave they will take and confirm this in writing within eight weeks and at least a week before the date they intend to return to work.

If it is more than eight weeks since the death, Acas suggests that they must also confirm in writing:

- their relationship with the child;
- that they have cared for or intend to care for the child; and
- the date they plan to return to work

v) Changing or cancelling leave

To change the start date:

- if it is less than 8 weeks after the death – they should tell their employer the new start date either verbally or in writing

⁹ Bereaved partner's paternity leave

- if it is more than 8 weeks after the death – they must tell their employer in writing, and give at least 1 weeks' notice before the new start date

To change the return date, they must give enough notice. [Find out more about returning to work.](#)

To cancel the leave, they must tell their employer in writing before the leave is due to start. For example, in a letter or email. They must give at least 1 weeks' notice if the agreed start date is more than 8 weeks after the death.

vi) Paid keeping in touch days

During a period of BPPL, a member of staff may undertake up to ten days of work for the employer, without bringing their leave to an end. Any work carried out on any day will constitute a day's work, even where this does not constitute a full day's work (similar to 'keeping in touch days' and maternity). The meaning of 'work' is set out in the Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026.

vii) Terms and conditions during BPPL

During BPPL, a member of staff is entitled to benefit from all terms and conditions (had they not be on BPPL) apart from remuneration and remain bound by any obligations to the HEI.

2.5 To check paternity leave entitlements

To confirm their paternity leave, members of staff are asked to complete and sign a paternity leave declaration and request, via the HR system, confirming the date of birth/adoption placement of their child. Human Resources will confirm their entitlements, in writing, within 21 days.

2.6 Contractual benefits during paternity leave

During the eight weeks of paternity leave, members of staff are entitled to the benefit of their normal terms and conditions of employment and will receive their basic weekly salary).

3. Summary of the member of staff's obligations

3.1 Entitlement to paternity leave and pay is subject to completion of a paternity leave declaration and request via the HR system.

3.2 The member of staff must notify their manager in writing (copying in their HR contact) of the dates on which they intend to take statutory paternity leave, giving at least 28 days' notice.

The member of staff must notify their manager in writing (copying in their HR contact) (including the week their baby is expected to be born or placed following adoption and when they would like to take their paternity leave) no later than the end of the 15th week before the other parent's expected week of childbirth (EWC), unless this is not reasonably practicable.

- 3.3 Requests to return to work on reduced hours must be made in writing at least 8 weeks before the member of staff intends to return to work.
- 3.4 Members of staff are obliged to notify the head of school/director if they start work for a new employer after paternity leave, regardless of whether the paternity pay period has ended, as this impacts upon the university's statutory paternity pay liability. Members of staff are bound by the terms and conditions of their contract of employment to give due notice if they intend to resign from their employment with the university.

4. If things do not go to plan

If things do not go entirely as planned, colleagues might find the maternity related sections of our Special Leave Policy and Sickness absence Policy and Procedure helpful.

Glossary of abbreviations used in this policy

SPP	Statutory Paternity Pay
MA	Maternity Allowance
EWC	Expected Week of Childbirth
BPPL	Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave