



Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the council's provision for employees who are adopting a child, including notification requirements and rights to time off work.

If you are matched for adoption with a child, you may be entitled to either adoption leave or paternity leave. One parent cannot take both periods of leave, and it is up to you and your partner to decide who is the main adopter and so will take adoption leave. The main adopter's partner may be entitled to take paternity leave or shared parental leave.

Main adopters are entitled to a total of 52 weeks of leave. We have set out below all of your rights and obligations should you be matched for adoption. We would ask that you notify us as soon as possible of your situation so that we can ensure you are fully aware of all your entitlements and obligations.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Council's Maternity Leave & Pay Policy, Paternity Leave & Pay Policy and Shared Parental Leave & Pay Policy.

Time off for adoption appointments

You are entitled to time off to attend adoption appointments in the period between the notification of a match and the date of placement. For single adopters or the main adopter in a joint adoption, you are entitled to paid time off to attend up to five appointments, with a maximum of 6.5 hours per appointment. The adopter's partner in a joint adoption will be entitled to unpaid time off to attend up to two appointments.

Where the time is paid, you will be paid at your normal hourly rate for this time.

If the main adopter's partner wishes to attend more than two adoption appointments, they should speak to their line manager who will consider the request at their discretion.

Notification requirements

In order to take time off for adoption appointments, the Council requires employees to provide confirmation of the following to the Clerk or, in the case of the Clerk, to the staffing committee:

- That they would like to take time off and state whether this will be the paid or unpaid entitlement
- The date and time of the appointments

- That the appointment has been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency

Eligibility

You are entitled to adoption leave from the commencement of employment. Adoption leave is not available in circumstances where a child is not newly matched for adoption, for example when a step-parent is adopting a partner's child/children. You must have notified the adoption agency of agreement to the placement and of agreement to the date of the placement.

Only one period of leave is available irrespective of whether more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement. However, if an additional child is adopted at a later date as a separate agreement then you could qualify again for a separate period of adoption leave.

Ordinary and additional adoption leave

Adoption leave is divided into two categories – 'ordinary' and 'additional'. Each is for 26 weeks, with additional leave following on from ordinary adoption leave, giving 52 weeks of leave in total. If you are eligible for ordinary adoption leave you will also qualify automatically for additional adoption leave.

During additional adoption leave the employment contract continues and you are entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except wages or salary. In the majority of cases, you will be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay during this period.

Commencement of adoption leave

You can choose to start your adoption leave on the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than was expected) or on a predetermined fixed date no earlier than 14 days before the expected date of placement and no later than the date of placement. Adoption leave can start on any day of the week.

Notification requirements

You are required to give us notice, in writing, of your intention to take adoption leave within 7 days of being notified by the adoption agency that you have been matched with a child, unless this is not reasonably practicable. The notice must specify:

- the date the child is expected to be placed with you
- the date you want the adoption leave to start

You should provide the 'matching certificate' from the adoption agency. The certificate will include basic information on matching and expected placement dates. You are able to

change your mind about the date on which you want your adoption leave to start providing you inform us at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

We will write to you to notify you of the date on which you are expected to return to work if the full entitlement to adoption leave is taken, within 28 days of the date on which you notified us of your intention to take leave or, if you have varied the date originally chosen to start adoption leave, within 28 days of the date on which adoption leave began.

Returning to work

If you are returning to work at the end of additional adoption leave, you should simply present yourself for work at the end of that period.

If you intend to return to work before the end of your additional adoption leave, you must give us at least 8 weeks' notice of the date on which you intend to return. If you do not give us 8 weeks' notice, we may postpone your return to a date ensuring that there has been 8 weeks' notice.

Shortly before your return to work, we will be in touch with you to arrange an informal meeting with the Chair of the Staffing Committee. The aim of this meeting is to discuss your return and to ensure it is as smooth a transition back to work as possible.

You have the right to return:

- With your seniority, pension rights and similar rights
- On terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied if you had not been absent

You will not be subject to any detriment by the council because you took or sought to take adoption leave.

Keeping in Touch days

You can work for up to 10 days during your adoption leave period without losing statutory payments for that week, or ending your entitlement to leave. For this purposes any work carried out on any day, even just an hour's work, is deemed to constitute 'a day's work'. Any days' work done under this provision will not have the effect of extending the total duration of the adoption leave period. You will be paid at your normal rate of pay for a KIT day.

Requesting a change to your pattern of work

You have the right to request that we consider changing your pattern of work following SPL, subject to eligibility criteria – see the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

Adoption pay

Dependent upon your length of service, you may be entitled to statutory adoption pay (SAP). If you qualify for SAP this will be paid for the first 6 weeks at 90% of your normal weekly earnings in the 8-week period up to the date of notification of a match, with the remainder paid at the earnings-related limit or the statutory rate, whichever is lower. SAP will be paid in the same way as your wages would be paid if you were not on leave. If you do not qualify for such a payment, you may, dependent on your circumstances, be eligible to receive allowances from the appropriate government departments.

Shared Parental Leave and pay

You may be entitled to opt in to shared parental leave, sharing up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay (subject to eligibility). If you think you would like to take shared parental leave instead of adoption leave, please see the Council's [Shared Parental Leave & Pay Policy](#).

Surrogacy and adoption rights

If you are an intended parent in a surrogacy arrangement who intends to apply, or has already applied for, a Parental Order you may be entitled to either adoption leave and pay, or paternity leave and pay. One parent cannot claim entitlement to both periods of leave and pay, and it is up to you to decide which you wish to claim (subject to eligibility).

You will be entitled to take unpaid time off to accompany the surrogate mother to up to two antenatal appointments, of up to 6.5 hours per appointment.

You are entitled to adoption leave from the start date of your employment. This will be for a total of 52 weeks, split into two periods of 'ordinary' and 'additional' adoption leave of 26 weeks each.

You are required to give us notice, in writing, of your entitlement to take adoption leave by the 15th week before the expected week of birth. You must also notify us of the actual date of birth as soon as is reasonably practicable after birth.

You should provide documentary evidence – a statutory declaration. This document will state that you have obtained, applied for, or intend to apply for a Parental Order in respect of the surrogate child and, where not received, this is expected to be made.

If you have begun a period of adoption leave in respect of a child before approval of a Parental Order, and you are subsequently notified that the application is refused, your adoption leave period will end 8 weeks after the week of that notification or the end of the adoption leave period, if that is earlier.

Dependent on your length of service, you may be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP).

Dual approved prospective adopters and adoption leave

If you are a dual approved prospective adopter – a local authority foster parent who has a child placed with you with an expectation to adopt that child in accordance with Section 22C of the Children Act 1989, you may be entitled to either adoption leave and pay or paternity leave and pay. One parent cannot claim entitlement to both periods of leave and pay, and it is up to you to decide which you wish to claim (subject to eligibility).

You are entitled to adoption leave from the start date of your employment. This will be for a total of 52 weeks, split into two periods of 'ordinary' and 'additional' adoption leave of 26 weeks each.

Only one period of leave is available irrespective of whether you go on to adopt the same child or children placed with you under Section 22C. However, if an additional child is placed with you under Section 22C at a later date as a separate agreement then you could qualify again for a separate period of adoption leave.

You can choose to start your adoption leave on the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than was expected) or on a predetermined fixed date up to 2 weeks before the placement of the child and no later than the date of placement. Adoption leave can start on any day of the week.

You are required to give us notice, in writing, of your intention to take adoption leave within 7 days of being notified of the child's placement by the local authority in accordance with Section 22C, unless this is not reasonably practicable. The notice must specify the date the child is expected to be placed with you and the date you want the adoption leave to start.

If you have begun a period of adoption leave in respect of a child placed with you under Section 22C and this placement does not proceed to a formal adoption, your adoption leave period will end 8 weeks after the child is removed or the end of the adoption leave period, if that is earlier.

Dependent upon your length of service, you may be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP).

Effect of Adoption Leave on contractual benefits

During adoption leave, your contract of employment continues (except for remuneration). You will continue to receive contractual benefits (except salary). Annual leave continues to accrue and occupational pension contributions continue during periods of paid adoption leave.

On returning to work, you are entitled to benefit from any general improvements to pay or terms and conditions that would have applied had you not been absent. Leave accrued may be taken in a block before or after adoption leave, subject to agreement.

Maintaining contact during Adoption Leave

Before adoption begins, we will discuss reasonable contact arrangements with you. You may wish to be informed of:

- Important meetings or announcements affecting staff
- Internal vacancies
- Significant changes in working practice
- Training opportunities

There may be occasions when we need to contact you regarding significant developments that may affect your role.

Data protection

When managing your adoption leave and pay, we will process personal data collected in accordance with the [HR Data Protection Policy](#). Personal and/or sensitive information is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, those who need to manage shared parental leave and pay. Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data would breach our data protection policies and should be reported immediately. A data breach may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

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