

PATERNITY/ PARTNER LEAVE AND PAY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Paternity/ partner leave is available to allow employees time away from work following the birth (including surrogacy) or adoption of a child to enable them to provide care for the child and/or support their partner after a birth or adoption.

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the eligibility requirements and the rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take paternity/ partner leave.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all University employees where the expected week of birth or date of adoption placement (or entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas), is after the 5 April 2026 or the child is born on or after 6 April 2026.

The right to paternity leave applies to biological fathers and the spouse/partner/civil partner of a woman who gives birth to a child for whom that individual intends to have a caring responsibility. The right to paternity leave also applies to adoptive parents and parents whose child has been born through surrogacy and intend to apply for a parental order within 6 months of the child's birth. This policy is applicable regardless of biological sex or gender.

Staff who are eligible to take Paternity/ Partner Leave may also be eligible for Shared Parental Leave. Prior to 6 April 2026 Paternity/ Partner Leave must be taken before Shared Parental Leave, there is no such restriction after the 6 April 2026.

2. POLICY

2.1 There are two schemes in operation:

- The Statutory Paternity Provisions, which are based on the relevant legislation. They are available to all employees subject to eligibility criteria.
- The University Occupational Paternity Scheme, which offers enhanced provisions in relation to pay during Ordinary Paternity Leave and is available to all employees with one year's service, or greater, by Expected Week of

Childbirth (EWC), date of adoption placement or entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas.

2.1.1 Requests for paternity/ partner leave should be submitted by completing the Paternity/ Partner Leave form that can be found in the Self Service Portal, People Services tile, Leave and Work-Life Balance. Queries can be directed to people.support@keele.ac.uk. Employees should also ensure that their line manager is informed of their intention to take paternity leave and any subsequent changes to their leave dates.

2.2 Statutory Paternity Provisions

2.2.1 An employee who satisfies the statutory eligibility and notification criteria will be entitled to Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave (unpaid) regardless of service length with the University, and may be entitled to receive statutory or occupational pay, subject to service and qualifying criteria.

2.2.2 Whilst on Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave, if the employee satisfies the eligibility and notification criteria, the employee may also be entitled to Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay (OSPP) if average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

2.2.3 Eligible employees can choose to take up to two weeks Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave (pro-rata if part-time). Leave does not have to be taken in one single period but must be booked in blocks of at least one week. This means that leave can be taken as a single period of leave of either one week or two weeks, or two non-consecutive periods of leave of a week each.

The length of statutory paternity leave is unaffected by multiple births or if more than one child is placed under the same adoption arrangement.

2.2.4 Employees must give the University written notice of their intention to take Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave. The Paternity/ Partner Leave form may be used for this purpose. This notice must be given by the end of the 15th week before the EWC and must include -

- the date of the EWC;
- declaration that they satisfy the conditions of the leave as outlined in 2.2.10;
- confirmation that the primary purpose of the leave is to care for the child.

2.2.5 In the case of an adopted child, the employee must give written notice of their intention to take Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave no later than seven days after the date on which the notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency or date of entry into Great Britain for overseas adoptions and must include –

- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with a child or received official notification in the case of an adoption from overseas;
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed with the adopter or enter Great Britain, or where the child has already been placed for adoption/ entered Great Britain, the date of that event;
- a declaration that they satisfy the conditions of the leave as outlined in 2.2.10; and
- confirmation that the primary purpose of the leave is to care for the child.

2.2.6 In addition to the notification of leave as outlined in 2.2.4 and 2.4.5, employees are required to give notice of their intention to commence leave 28 days prior to each period of leave, (this can be given at the same time as the notice of intention to take paternity leave). OSPP is only payable for the weeks in which the employee is on paternity leave.

2.2.7 Employees can change their mind about the start date of their paternity leave by giving 28 days advance written notice of the earlier of the new date or the original date of leave requested.

2.2.8 Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave cannot commence before the date of the baby's birth or placement/date of entry into Great Britain of an adopted child and must be completed within the first 52 weeks of the actual date of birth, the date on which the child was placed for adoption with the adopter, or the date of the child's entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas. If the child is born early, Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave must be completed within 52 weeks of the first day of the EWC.

2.2.9 Employees can choose their leave to commence:

- from the date of the child's birth or placement/entry into Great Britain in the case of adoption (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's birth or placement/ entry into Great Britain (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which the baby is expected to be born or placed/ entered into Great Britain in the case of an adoption. If the child is not born or placed/entered into the Great Britain on or before that date, the date must be varied by submitting a later date or selecting one of the other options.

2.2.10 Employees must satisfy all the following conditions in order to qualify for Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave. They must:

- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing;

- be the biological father of the child, the spouse/civil partner or partner of the mother/birth parent, or an adoptive parent, or an intended parent by surrogacy, who is not taking adoption leave;
- submit a Paternity/ Partner Leave Form as evidence that the eligibility conditions are met (the MATB1 or matching certificate must also be submitted) within the timeframes specified.

2.2.11 Employees must satisfy all the conditions outlined in 2.2.10 plus the following conditions to qualify for Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay:

- have worked continuously with the University for at least 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before the EWC or the end of the week in which the adoption match is formally notified; and
- average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

2.2.12 During Ordinary Statutory Paternity Leave employees are entitled to all normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of remuneration. Continuity of service continues to accrue throughout this period of paternity leave as does annual leave.

2.2.13 Pension rights and contributions shall be managed in accordance with the provisions of the relevant superannuation scheme in which the University participates, providing that these provisions do not conflict with any statutory requirements that may apply at the time.

2.2.14 For staff participating in Payflex+, no employee contributions will be deducted from pay and the University will maintain the same level of contributions and pension benefits for the paternity leave period. Further information on Payflex+ can be found on the University website.

2.3 Occupational Paternity Scheme (Ordinary Paternity Leave/Pay)

2.3.1 In addition to the statutory provisions relating to Ordinary Paternity Pay, employees with one year's service by the EWC, adoption placement or date of entry into Great Britain in the case of an overseas adoption, will be eligible for the provisions of the Occupational Paternity Scheme.

2.3.2 For the two weeks of Ordinary Paternity Leave employees will be entitled to receive their normal pay –i.e. the pay that would have been received under the contract of employment had the employee not been on Ordinary Paternity Leave.

2.3.3 Employees will make normal pension contributions, (i.e. the same percentage) based on the pay they receive during their Ordinary Paternity Leave. Where employees are members of one of the superannuation schemes in which the

University participates, the University will undertake to pay both employer and employee contributions (excluding AVCs) in respect of the difference between any paternity pay received and the employee's normal pay for the entire Ordinary Paternity Leave period.

2.3.4 For staff participating in Payflex the salary exchange under Payflex+ will continue for staff who are in receipt of sufficient occupational paternity pay but will cease for staff on Statutory Paternity Pay only. The University will maintain the same level of contributions and pension benefits for the paternity leave period. Further information on Payflex+ can be found on the University website.

3. Transitional rules for giving notice

3.1 Transitional rules apply to support employees who only become entitled to paternity leave because the previous 26-week qualifying service requirement no longer applies from 6 April 2026. These rules apply in situations where the expected week of childbirth falls in the period from 5 April to 25 July 2026. In these cases, the notice period the employee must give to take paternity leave is reduced to 28 days.

4. Change in circumstances (bereavement or disrupted placement)

4.1 The loss of a child is devastating, and we sincerely hope that none of our staff will experience this. The University acknowledges that pregnancy loss at any stage, ending of adoption placement or bereavement can be extremely difficult. We endeavour to support parents and carers affected in a compassionate manner and it is therefore important that entitlements in such unfortunate circumstances are easily accessible and digestible.

4.2 In the devastating circumstances that a baby is stillborn after 24 weeks or the baby dies soon after birth, eligible members of staff remain entitled to take paternity leave, subject to the eligibility criteria. Whilst there is no entitlement to paternity leave following a pregnancy loss in the first 24 weeks, the University is aware that this can be an extremely difficult time and managers are encouraged to offer support through such a period.

4.3 In relation to adoption and in the unfortunate event that an adoptive parent is informed that the placement of a child will not go ahead, or it ends early and after official notification has been received by the University, the period of paternity leave may still apply.

4.4 Following a period of paternity/ parental leave individuals may also be entitled to a period of Parental Bereavement Leave. Further details can be found in the University Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay.

4.5 Individuals are encouraged to seek support via their line manager. Guidance on the application of the policy and/ or entitlement to leave can be obtained from people.support@keele.ac.uk.

5. Bereaved partners' paternity leave

5.1 Before the 6 April 2026 and in the devastating circumstances where the mother/ birth parent, adopter or primary carer of a child dies during childbirth or within the first year following birth or adoption, the child's parent or the partner of the mother/ birth parent or adopter may take two weeks statutory paternity leave without the requirement for 26 weeks' continuous service. The restrictions preventing an employee from taking paternity leave after shared parental leave are also lifted in these circumstances.

5.2 In the devastating circumstances where the child's mother/ birth parent, adopter or primary carer passes away on or after 6 April 2026 and within the first year of the birth or placement, the biological father, or the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the mother/ birth parent or primary adopter may be entitled to an extended period of 52 weeks statutory bereavement partners paternity leave.

5.3 Leave may only be taken during the paternity leave eligibility period i.e. 52 weeks from the child's birth or placement (see 2.2.8 for further details) and must be taken in one block. If the bereavement occurs within 13 days before the end of the relevant 52 week period, bereaved partners paternity leave may be taken up to 14 days after the bereavement, even if this falls outside of the 52-week period.

5.4 The bereaved parent can choose when to commence leave as outlined below:

- **To commence within 8 weeks after the bereavement date** – the employee can give verbal or written notice of their intention to take leave prior to their first day of absence due to bereaved partner's paternity leave. Colleagues are however encouraged to use the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave form. In any event this form must be completed within 8 weeks of the bereavement and at least one week prior to returning to work.
- **To commence more than 8 weeks after the bereavement date** – the employee must give notice of their intention to take leave in writing via the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave form and at least one weeks prior to the first date of absence due to bereaved partners paternity leave.

Written notice can be given on the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave Form in the Self-Service Portal, People Services tile, Leave and Work-Life Balance. Queries may be directed to people.support@keele.ac.uk.

5.5 Notice to vary the start date or to cancel leave dates may be given prior to the last notified leave start date and in line with the above timescales and methods. Additionally, where the last notified start date is more than 8 weeks after the

bereavement date, notice should be given at least one week before to the last notified leave start date and one week before the new leave start date.

5.6 Similarly, the intended date of return may be varied by giving written notice via the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave form in line with the following timescales:

- Where the last intended return date is no more than eight weeks after the bereavement date a change in the notified intended return date must be made at least one week before the last intended return date and at least one week before the new intended return date.
- Where the last intended return date is more than eight weeks after the bereavement date a change in the intended return date must be made at least eight weeks before the last notified intended return date and at least eight weeks before the new intended return date.

5.7 Where an employee intends to return to work without providing the notice outlined, the return can be postponed by the University until the required period of notice has lapsed. However, it is anticipated that this action will not be taken where an alternative solution can be found and employees will be supported to return to work wherever possible.

5.8 Where circumstances change and the bereaved partner no longer has responsibility for the care of the child, they should notify the University and the period of leave may be curtailed in accordance with regulation. Further information can be obtained from people.support@keele.ac.uk.

5.9 Keeping In Touch (KiT) Days

5.9.1 Employees taking Bereaved Partners Parental Leave may carry out up to ten days' work during a period of leave without bringing that period of leave to an end. Further information can be found in the University's Keeping in Touch Days Guidance.

5.9.2 Contact between the employee and University to discuss the individuals return to work or any other reasonable contact does not constitute work and will not be treated as a KiT day. Also any day's work carried out on a KiT day does not have the effect of extending the duration of the period of Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 For the avoidance of doubt, where a role title, department, faculty or professional service area is named and it is no longer in existence, it should be read as the equivalent role or department, faculty or professional service area. Should individuals remain uncertain, clarification can be sought from a senior member of staff within the management line.

6.2 Employee

- a) To ensure that appropriate and timely notification is given, and all relevant forms are completed/submitted.

6.3 Line Manager

- a) To provide support to members of their team who are taking paternity/partner leave.

6.4 People and Organisational Development

- a) To provide further guidance on the application of this Policy when required.

7. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- a) Shared Paternity Leave and Pay Policy
- b) Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
- c) Adoption Leave and Pay Policy
- d) Parental Leave Policy
- e) Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy
- f) Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure

8. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

8.1 As a general principle, the Policy will be reviewed by People and Organisational Development, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions after three years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC and Council procedures, where applicable.

8.2 This Policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

8.3 This policy will be published on the University policy zone web page and will also be accessible via the People and Organisational Development web pages.

8.4 Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this policy and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken.

9. ANNEXES

Not applicable.

10. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Paternity/ Partner Leave and Pay Policy
Owner	Chief People Officer
Version Number	1.2
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	9 February 2023
Approval Date	06 April 2026
Approved By	UEC
Date of Commencement	06 April 2026
Date of Last Review	06 April 2026
Date for Next Review	06 April 2029
Related University Policy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shared Paternity Leave and Pay Policy b) Maternity Leave and Pay Policy c) Adoption Leave and Pay Policy d) Parental Leave e) Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Policy f) Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	Paternity Partner