



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

The following Policy sets out the arrangements for managing arrangements for leave and absences from work outside the general scope of the holiday and bank holiday

- Maternity Leave and Pay;
- Paternity Leave and Pay;
- Adoption Leave and Pay;
- Antenatal Appointments;
- Shared Parental Leave and Pay;
- Parental Leave;
- Bereavement Leave;
- Time Off for Dependants/Compassionate Leave.

Maternity Leave and Pay

Once a pregnancy is confirmed employees are asked to let their manager/supervisor know as soon as reasonably possible. There is an entitlement to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave which may begin at any time on or after the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC). This period is made up of 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave (AML).

If you have accumulated at least 26 weeks' continuous service up to and including the 15th week before the EWC then you may be entitled to receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) provided that your average weekly earnings are sufficient. SMP is made up of 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks of OML followed by 33 weeks at the lower rate. Future Roots provides SMP in accordance with current legislation. Please check with your Manager on these rates.

To exercise your right to maternity leave you must notify your manager/supervisor in writing, no later than by the end of the 15th week before the EWC:

- that you are pregnant;
- of the date of your EWC; and
- of the date on which you intend your OML to begin.

You may be asked to provide a MATB1 form signed by your doctor or registered midwife.

If you subsequently change your mind about the date on which you want your OML to begin you must do so in writing providing you give at least 28 days' notice of the revised date.

Once you have advised Future Roots in writing of the date on which you intend to begin OML we will write to you within 28 days to advise you of the date on which your maternity leave will end.



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

If you have any further questions concerning maternity, please speak to your Manager.

Paternity Leave and Pay

Future Roots provides paternity leave and pay in accordance with current legislation. Eligibility for paternity leave is dependent on:

- You being an employee with at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the mother's expected week of childbirth (EWC); and
- You being the child's biological father (or if not, the child's biological father being the mother's husband or partner) and having (or expecting to have) responsibility for the child's upbringing.

Eligible employees are entitled to take either one week or two weeks' consecutive leave, once only, within 56 days of the child's birth. If you wish to take paternity leave, then you must inform your manager/supervisor in writing by the end of the 15th week before the EWC. You must state when the EWC is, whether you will take one or two weeks leave and when you intend the leave to begin. If you subsequently change your mind about the start date of the leave you must notify your Manager in writing at least 28 days before the revised date.

If your average weekly earnings are sufficient you will be entitled to statutory paternity pay (SPP), please check with your manager/supervisor on the current statutory rates of paternity pay.

Adoption Leave and Pay

Once you discover you have been matched with a child for adoption, please let your manager/supervisor know as soon as reasonably possible. You will be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave which is made up of 26 weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) and 26 weeks Additional Adoption Leave (AAL). Adoption leave is only available to one of the parents of the adopted child; the other parent may be eligible for paternity leave.

To take SAL you must notify your manager/supervisor in writing within 7 days of receiving formal notification of your being matched with a child for adoption. You must provide documentary evidence (in the form of a signed and dated "matching certificate" provided by the adoption agency) and advise Future Roots of the date on which the child is expected to be placed with you for adoption along with the date on which you intend your adoption leave to begin. You can choose to begin the leave any date from 2 weeks before the date on which the child is expected to be placed with you.



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

If you subsequently change your mind about the date, you must notify Future Roots in writing of the fact at least 28 days before the revised date.

If you have accumulated at least 26 weeks' continuous service up to and including the week in which you are matched with the child, you will normally qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) provided your average weekly earnings are sufficient. SAP is made up of 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks of OAL followed by 33 weeks at the lower rate. Future Roots provides SAP in accordance with current legislation. Please check with your Manager on these rates.

From 5th April 2015, the right to adoption leave is extended to parents for whom a court has made a parental order and intended parents in a surrogacy situation, in respect of children whose expected week of birth begins on or after 5th April 2015 and to some local authority foster parents who are prospective adopters and who have been notified of a child's placement after 5th April 2015.

Note: An employee is not entitled to take ordinary adoption leave in relation to a child in the capacity of adopter if the employee has already taken ordinary adoption leave as a result of that child being placed, or being expected to be placed, with the employee as a foster parent.

Antenatal Appointments

Female pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable time off on a paid basis to attend ante natal appointments. Wherever possible, the appointments should be made at times convenient to themselves, their colleagues and the business. With the exception of the first appointment, evidence of appointments will be required if requested.

Prospective fathers and partners also have the right to take time off on an unpaid basis to attend two antenatal appointments. The appointments may be up to 6.5 hours per appointment.

Prospective fathers and partners must be in a 'qualifying relationship' defined as follows:

- The husband of the pregnant woman;
- The same sex civil partner to the pregnant woman;
- The biological father to the unborn child;
- The parent to the unborn child; or
- The intended parent(s) to any surrogacy situation.

Furthermore, employees who are adoptive parents also have the right to take time off to attend adoption appointments. The appointments may be up to 6.5 hours per appointment and the entitlement is as follows -



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

- Paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments if the employee is adopting a child on their own; or
- Unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments if two employees are adopting jointly (one may have the first right and one the second right).

Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave (SPL) is designed to enable working parents to share leave and to take time off in a more flexible way. This will allow both parents to be at home together if this is what they choose.

SPL and statutory shared parental pay (ShPP) will be available for eligible employees whose baby is due on or after 5 April 2015 or who have a child placed with them for adoption on or after that date.

SPL will be created where an eligible mother or adopter brings their maternity or adoption leave to an end early. This is called “curtailing” maternity or adoption leave. The untaken weeks of maternity or adoption leave can be taken as shared parental leave if the mother/adopter or their partner is eligible for this – up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Shared parental leave may be taken in a single continuous block or may be taken in smaller blocks of leave (a minimum of a week at a time), combined with time at work.

ShPP will be created where an eligible mother or adopter chooses to bring their maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance to an end early – this is called reducing the maternity or adoption pay period or the maternity allowance period. The untaken maternity or adoption pay, or maternity allowance will become available as statutory shared parental pay – up to a maximum of 37 weeks.

Qualifying Criteria

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) can only be used by two people:

- The mother/adopter and
- One of the following:
 - the father of the child (in the case of birth); or
 - the spouse or partner of the child's mother/ adopter.

Both parents must share the main responsibility for the care of the child at the time of the birth/placement for adoption.



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

Additionally, each employee must satisfy the following criteria:

- Have a minimum of 26 weeks' service at the end of the 15th week before the child's expected due date/placement and still be employed by Future Roots in the week before any shared parental leave is due to start;
- Have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave or maternity allowance and have ended or given notice to reduce any maternity/adoption entitlements;
- The employee's partner must also meet the 'employment and earnings test' requiring them in the 66 weeks leading up to the child's expected due date/matching date have worked for at least 26 weeks and satisfied the earnings rule in any 13 of those weeks.

Notice of Entitlement

Notice of entitlement must be given to Future Roots at least 8 weeks before any shared parental leave or pay can be taken and will include:

- the number of weeks that the mother or adopter took maternity or adoption leave (or will have taken, where notice has been given to curtail the leave on a specific future date);
- how many weeks of shared parental leave and pay is available to the employee and their partner;
- how much each intends to take;
- a declaration from the employee's partner stating that he or she meets the employment and earnings test. This declaration will also state that he or she gives their consent to the employee taking shared parental leave and/or pay and to you to processing information provided by them; and
- a non-binding indication of how the employee will take the shared parental leave that is available to him or her.

The employee may choose to submit their notice to book shared parental leave and pay at the same time as their notice of entitlement.

Once eligibility and entitlement has been confirmed, SPL can commence as follows:

- The mother can take SPL after she has taken the legally required two weeks of maternity leave immediately following the birth of the child;
- The adopter can take SPL after taking at least two weeks of adoption leave;



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

- The father/partner/spouse can take SPL immediately following the birth/placement of the child but may first choose to exhaust any paternity leave entitlements (as the father/partner cannot take paternity leave or pay once they have taken any SPL or Shared Parental Pay).

SPL must end no later than one year after the birth/placement of the child. Any SPL not taken by the first birthday or first anniversary of placement for adoption is lost.

Making a request to 'book' shared parental leave and pay

A notice to book leave must be submitted to Future Roots at least 8 weeks before leave can be taken.

The employee may only give Future Roots 3 notices to book leave or to vary a previously agreed pattern of leave. The notifications to book leave may take the form of a single continuous block of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

When Future Roots receives a request for SPL, the employee will be invited to a meeting within 2 weeks of submitting the request in order to discuss it. Requests for discontinuous leave (e.g. 2 weeks in June, 3 weeks in September and all of November and December) will be discussed with a view to establish whether the period's discontinuous leave can be accommodated by Future Roots in their requested form.

Once a request for SPL has been agreed the employee will be notified in writing of the end date of any period of SPL.

Changing a SPL Plan

Leave arrangements that have been notified can be changed by means of a notice to vary the agreed leave; 8 weeks' notice must be given.

The employee can give notice to end a period of leave earlier or later than previously notified, or to aggregate a number of discontinuous weeks into a single block using a variation notice.

A notice to vary agreed leave counts towards the cap of 3 notifications to book leave.

Contact during Shared Parental Leave

Before an employee's SPL begins, Future Roots will discuss the arrangements for them to keep in touch during their leave. Future Roots reserves the right in any event to maintain reasonable contact with the employee from time to time during their SPL. This may be to discuss the employee's plans to return to work, to ensure the individual is aware of any



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

possible promotion opportunities, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or simply to update them on developments at work during their absence.

Shared Parental Leave in Touch days

An employee can agree to work for Future Roots (or attend training) for up to 20 days during SPL without bringing their period of SPL to an end or impacting on their right to claim ShPP for that week. These are known as "Shared Parental Leave in Touch" or "SPLIT" days. Any work carried out on a day or part of a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

Any work undertaken is a matter for agreement between Future Roots and the employee. The employee taking a SPLIT day will receive full pay for any day worked. If a SPLIT day occurs during a week when the employee is receiving ShPP, this will be effectively 'topped up' so that the individual receives full pay for the day in question. Any SPLIT days worked do not extend the period of SPL.

The employee may use SPLIT days to work part of a week during SPL subject to the agreement of Future Roots. Future Roots and the employee may use SPLIT days to affect a gradual return to work by the employee towards the end of a long period of SPL or to trial a possible flexible working pattern.

Returning to work after Shared Parental Leave

The employee is expected to return on the next working day after their SPL end date. If the employee is unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, Future Roots's normal arrangements for sickness absence will apply. In any other case, late return without prior authorisation will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If the employee wishes to return to work earlier than the expected return date, they may provide a written notice to vary the leave and must give the organisation at least eight weeks' notice of their date of early return.

On returning to work after SPL, the employee is entitled to return to the same job if the employee's aggregate total statutory maternity/paternity/adoption leave and SPL amounts to 26 weeks or less, he or she will return to the same job.

If the employee's maternity/paternity/adoption leave and SPL amounts to 26 weeks or more in total, the employee is entitled to return to the same job they held before commencing the



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

last period of leave or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable and appropriate and on terms and conditions no less favorable.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for ShPP, the employee must:

- meet the qualifying requirements for shared parental leave and have a partner who also meets the employment and earnings test;
- have earned not less than the lower earnings limit in the relevant period.

This is usually the 8 weeks leading up to the qualifying week (as with shared parental leave, the qualifying week is the end of the 15th week before the week in which the baby is due to be born, or the week that the adopter is notified of being matched with a child).

Parental Leave

Eligible employees have the right to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave during the first 18 years of their child's or adopted child's life. Parental leave is available to both parents and may be taken in respect of each relevant child.

To qualify for parental leave, you must have at least 12 months' continuous service and:

- be the parent (named on birth certificate) of the relevant child, or
- have acquired formal parental responsibility under the Children Act 1989, or
- be the spouse or civil partner of one of the parents of a child under 18 years old and have acquired formal parental responsibility for the child, or
- have adopted a child under 18.

Additionally, you must:

- produce evidence relating to your responsibility for the child in question and the child's date of birth (or date of adoption) if asked for;
- provide at least 21 days' notice of the date on which you wish a period of parental leave to begin (which may be postponed by Future Roots – see below).

Parental leave must be taken in blocks of 1 week and no more than 4 weeks may be taken in any one year in respect of any individual relevant child.

Future Roots may postpone parental leave if it considers that the operation of the business would be unduly interrupted if you were to take leave on the dates requested. If this is the



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

case, you will be notified within 7 days of submitting your request of this along with alternative dates between which you could take the leave.

Parental Bereavement Leave

If you suffer the loss of a child, we will seek to do what we can to support you. In accordance with current legislation, Future Roots provides parental bereavement leave and pay as follows.

All employees are entitled, irrespective of length of service, to take parental bereavement leave (PBL) following the death of a child. The right applies to all employed parents who lose a child under the age of 18 or suffer a stillbirth (from 24 weeks of pregnancy).

You are entitled to PBL if you are the child's parent, or the parent's partner. Please speak to your manager/supervisor to establish whether you meet these definitions as set out in the legislation.

The leave can be taken as a single block of one week, a block of two weeks' leave or as two separate blocks of one week and may be taken at any time in the period of 56 weeks after the child's death.

If you wish to take parental bereavement leave, you need to give notice of the following:

- the date of the child's death;
- the date on which you want your PBL to start; and
- whether you want to take one week or two weeks' PBL.

You do not need to give us this information in writing although it would be helpful to us if you feel able to do so.

Eligibility for parental bereavement pay (SPBP) –

In order to qualify SPBP, the following will apply:

- you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the week immediately before the one in which the child dies;
- you were employed by us on the date the child died, and
- your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each year.

SPBP will be paid at the same statutory rate as SMP, SAP, SPP and ShPP or 90% of average weekly earnings, where this is lower.



Parental and Carers' Leave Arrangements Policy and Statutory Rights 2025-2026

Time Off for Dependants

Employees may, in certain circumstances, be entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to care for dependants.

A dependant is defined as the employee's spouse, child or parent, or anyone who lives in the same household as the employee (other than a tenant, lodger, boarder or employee) – this includes partners and covers anyone who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance in the event of an illness or injury.

A reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to care for dependants is permitted in order to take action that is necessary:

- to provide help when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for providing care when a dependant is ill or injured;
- to cope when the arrangements for caring for a dependant unexpectedly break down;
- when a dependant dies; or
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child at a time when the child's school has responsibility for him or her.

In order to take time off to care for dependants you must inform Future Roots of the reason for your absence as soon as is reasonably practicable and of how long you expect the absence to last. The time off must be to deal with the immediate issue and to put in place any longer-term care arrangements that may be necessary.