

# NEW PARENT LEAVE POLICY

**Author(s):** Employee Relations Team & Deputy Director of HR

**Executive Lead:** Director of Workforce Transformation

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Review date: January 2026

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## History

Issue	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Approved by
1	May 2019	Policy created by splitting it out from the Maternity, adoption, maternity support (paternity), shared parental, fertility treatment and surrogacy leave policy Policy renamed and rewritten to create more comprehensive and inclusive policy. Sign posting to new Tax Free childcare scheme included.	TEC
2	January 2023	Review of Policy	TEC

For more information on the status of this document, please contact:	Employee Relations Manager, HR Business Partners & HR Advisors
Policy Author	Employee Relations Team & Deputy Director HR
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Audience	All staff

<b>NEW PARENT LEAVE POLICY</b>
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ashford & St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (ASPH) is committed to supporting working parents to achieve a good work life balance. This policy sets out the Trust's arrangements for supporting employees who are about to welcome a new child into their family either as the biological father, mother's partner, father's partner or adopter or partner of the adopter.

The policy sets out the provisions for new parent leave and pay (previously titled 'Paternity Leave' or 'Maternity Support Leave'). It seeks to be flexible, fair and supportive and is part of a suite of policies providing support and benefits to employees with parenting or caring responsibilities:

- Adoption Leave Policy
- Annual leave policy
- Buying and Selling Annual Leave Scheme
- Career Break Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Maternity Leave and Fertility Treatment Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Special Leave Policy

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies equally to all employees regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Mother:** The biological parent who gives birth, regardless of their gender identity

**Father:** The biological parent who does not give birth, or adopter, regardless of their gender identity

**Partner:** is the partner of the parent of leave, including same sex partners

## 4. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 **Employees** have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that they are aware of the entitlements set out in this document.
- Adhere to the procedures outlined within this policy.
- Submit application forms and associated documents in a timely manner, e.g. application forms, MATB1 Form, Birth Certificate, Matching Certificate
- Agree a way of keeping in touch with their manager before they commence their leave.
- Maintain clinical practice and professional registration whilst on leave.

4.2 **Managers** have a responsibility to:

- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Ensure policy implementation and compliance within their area of responsibility.
- Discuss leave and pay entitlements with their employees.
- Ensure application forms are completed and submitted to HR/ Payroll in a timely manner
- Ensure application forms and Staff Changes Forms are completed and submitted to HR / Payroll in a timely manner.

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- Agree a way of keeping in touch with employees before they commence their leave and keep them informed about any relevant developments within the Department and Trust during their leave.

4.3 **Human Resources** has a responsibility to:

- Advise employees of the support available to them and to advise them of their rights and obligations under this policy.
- To confirm the employee's paid and unpaid leave entitlements under this agreement (or statutory entitlements if the employee does not qualify for occupational New Parent Pay), along with the planned return date.

4.4 **Payroll** have a responsibility to:

- Advise employees of their pay entitlements under this policy.
- Ensure that payments are made in line with both current Occupational and Statutory regulations.
- To ensure that the necessary data and proof has been collected from the employee to satisfy Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) auditing.
- Ensure that payments are made timely in line with normal salary crediting.
- Update ESR to reflect the leave taken

**5. ENTITLEMENT TO NEW PARENT LEAVE**

5.1 You will be entitled to New Parent Leave if

- you are the biological father of the child or you are the spouse or partner, or you are the child's adopter or the partner of the adopter; and
- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing

5.2 For staff with 12 months continuous service with one or more NHS employers at the beginning of the week either in which the baby is due / child is to be matched the leave entitlement is:

- two weeks New Parent Leave per birth/adoption with full occupational New Parent pay (full pay less any Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) receivable)
- only one period of occupational New Parent pay is available for a multiple birth/adoption.

5.3 Staff with less than 12 months NHS service at the beginning of the week in which the baby is due/child is to be matched are entitled to:

- two weeks unpaid leave
- the employee may be entitled to SPP, at the current statutory rate, subject to 26 weeks continuous service with this Trust at the 15th week before the baby is due or at the end of the week notified if matched for adoption

**6. REQUESTS FOR NEW PARENT LEAVE**

6.1 Requests for new parent leave should be made in writing to your line manager using the New Parent Leave Application Form (Appendix 1) together with a copy of your partner's MATB1 certificate or matching certificate (in cases of adoption). Employees should give as much notice as possible but at least 28 days before they want to start leave (later notification will only be accepted if there is good reason for the delay; in particular in cases of adoption)

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- 6.2 Employees can change their mind about the date on which they want their leave to start providing they tell their employer at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).
- 6.3 Eligible employees can choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' New Parent leave (not odd days or split weeks).

**7. TIMING OF NEW PARENT LEAVE**

- 7.1 Leave can be taken:
  - from the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected)/date of placement, or
  - from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's birth/date of placement (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/of expected placement of the child.
- 7.2 Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth/placement but must be completed:
  - within 56 days of the actual date of birth of the child/placement of the child, or
  - within the period from the actual date of birth/placement up to 56 days starting the first day after the date of the expected birth/placement, if the child is born early/placed early.

**8. ADDITIONAL TIME OFF**

Parents may choose to take further time off to care for their child(ren). Options include:

- Annual leave (see Annual Leave policy)
- Shared Parental Leave (see Shared Parental Leave Policy)
- Unpaid leave or a career break (see Special Leave Policy or Career Break Policy)
- Unpaid Parental Leave (see Special Leave Policy)

**9. STILL BIRTH AND DEATH OF A CHILD**

- 9.1 An employee will be entitled to New Parent leave if their baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy. If the baby is born alive at any point in the pregnancy but dies later, the employee will be entitled to paid New Parent leave in the usual way.
- 9.2 In the event of still birth after 24 weeks of pregnancy or the death of a child, other leave options are also available as detailed in the Special Leave Policy (including Child Bereavement Leave) and normal sickness arrangements will apply if absence is due to certificated sickness.
- 9.3 The Trust has a free, confidential support service available to all staff provided by the Employee Assistance Programme (see section 13 of this policy for more details).

**10. ATTENDANCE AT APPOINTMENTS**

Reasonable time off to accompany a partner to attend pre-natal appointments will also be given. The employee may be asked to produce evidence of appointments. This can be taken as unpaid or annual leave.

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## **11. FLEXIBLE WORKING**

If at the end of their New Parent Leave the employee wishes to return to work on different hours the manager has a duty to facilitate this wherever possible in line with service needs. Requests must not be unreasonably refused, and Managers are advised to consider flexible alternatives, including arrangements on a temporary basis. Further information can be found in the Trust's Flexible Working Policy.

## **12. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy will be available to all staff through publication on the Intranet. Copies can also be requested from the Human Resources Department.

The line manager will be responsible for ensuring their staff are made aware of this policy and for ensuring compliance.

## **13. PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICY**

This process for monitoring compliance with the policy will be through the paperwork submitted to Human Resources Department for processing and also any complaints received pertaining to any part of this policy.

## **14. POLICY EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An impact assessment has been carried out for the policy (attached Appendix 2) and will be kept under review.

## **15. POLICY ARCHIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

This is a Trust wide document and archiving arrangements are managed by the Quality Department who can be contacted to request master/archived documents.

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## GUIDANCE ON NURSERY AND CHILDCARE PROVISIONS

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### **Onsite Nurseries and Play Schemes**

There is usually a waiting list for places at First Steps Nurseries at St Peter's and at Ashford. Staff are advised to contact the Nursery Manager, at St Peter's on ext. 2192 and Ashford on ext. 4757 at the earliest opportunity to place their name on the waiting list.

We also offer a play scheme which runs from the St Peter's site and covers the 11 weeks of school holidays during the academic year (following the Surrey County Council holiday dates). We regret that we are unable to cover in-set days as these vary from school to school. However, we do operate an emergency play scheme, which is subject to the availability of our staff, to cover emergency closures of schools during inclement weather.

Play scheme is for children aged 4years (once at school) up until 10 years 11 months.

Please contact the St Peter's Nursery Extension 2192 and ask for the Play scheme Coordinator or the Assistant Childcare Manager for more information.

Lists of childcare facilities are also available through Surestart <https://www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre>

### **Help with Childcare Costs**

The Government closed the Childcare Voucher scheme to new entrants from 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Current users can continue to receive Childcare Vouchers to pay for registered childcare costs as long as they remain eligible and provided they do not change employer. Parents with first babies born after 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018, any not registered before this date and current users who change employer after 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 should seek further information on help with childcare costs. You may be eligible for:

- ❖ Tax Free Childcare
- ❖ Tax Credits
- ❖ Universal Credits
- ❖ Help While You Study

For further information go to <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

### **Tax Free Childcare**

Tax Free Childcare is a scheme administered by HMRC, whereby working families can be offered 20% support to qualifying childcare costs up to a certain limit. Both Parents are eligible if you are employed, self-employed or both. It is also available in a single parent household. To qualify each parent has to be earning at least the minimum wage for 16 hours a week and no more than £100,000 a year. More details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-tax-free-childcare>

### **Workplace Nurseries**

Under the 'Work Place Nurseries Exception' the cost of a place in a workplace nursery is completely exempt from Tax and National Insurance Contributions. If you received confirmation of a nursery place and it has been agreed in writing, call payroll on 2799 to see if you are eligible for the savings. (Please bear in mind this can have an impact on your pension contributions at a later date).

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## **Early Years Funding**

Both of the Trust Nurseries offer Funded Early Education for Two Year Olds (FEET Funding), Universal and Extended Hours for 3 and 4 year olds.

## **OTHER BENEFITS AND INFORMATION**

There are occasions when employees are entitled to other statutory benefits/allowances and information about all statutory maternity/adoption, Shared Parental Leave and paternity rights can be found using the following link: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## **HELP AND SUPPORT**

The Trust's Employee Assistance Programme, provided by Vivup. This is a free and confidential service available to all Trust employees. Supporting staff's mental health and wellbeing with our dedicated Employee Assistance Programme. Employee's may access impartial, confidential advice from qualified counsellors for many different issues, including: downloadable self-help workbooks, debt advice, a mental health app and more. The telephone helpline is available 24/7, 365 A wide range of information and practical help can be found via the website at [www.vivup.co.uk](http://www.vivup.co.uk). Alternatively, can call them anytime, day or night, on 03303 800658 (or 0800 023 9324 free from any standard UK landline or mobile phone).

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**APPENDIX 1**

**APPLICATION FOR NEW PARENT LEAVE**

**Applicants:** Once you have completed this form inserting the appropriate dates, sign overleaf and pass to your manager for authorisation of leave. This form must be submitted with a copy of the MAT B1 or MATCHING CERTIFICATE or BIRTH CERTIFICATE/SURROGACY AGREEMENT/PARENTAL ORDER/SOLICITOR CORRESPONDENCE (for Surrogacy) to the Human Resources Department, Ashford Hospital.

**Personal Details**

<b>Forename(s)</b>	<b>Surname</b>
<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Ward/Dept &amp; Base</b>
<b>Home Address</b>	
<b>NHS Continuous Service Date (if known)</b>	<b>Date Commenced at ASPH</b>
<b>Due date /Expected date of Adoption</b>	<b>Actual Date of Birth/Adoption (if applicable)</b>
<b>Number of Weeks Leave Requested</b>  <i>New Parent Leave    One / Two</i> <i>(delete as applicable)</i>	<b>Dates of :</b>  <i>New Parent Leave .....</i>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Print:</b>	

**Managers' Declaration:**

I certify to the best of knowledge the above details are correct.  
 I have discussed New Parent leave with the above and I am aware of the employee's intentions.

Signed: .....

Print Name and Job Title: .....

Dated.....

## APPENDIX 2

### Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of this Policy is to inform all direct employees of the choices available to them when they welcome a new child into their family either as the biological father, mother’s partner, father’s partner or adopter or partner of the adopter.

All Direct Trust employees will be impacted by this.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there any indication or evidence (including from consultation with relevant groups) that different groups with regards to protected characteristics have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to the proposed policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there potential for or evidence that the proposed policy or proposal will affect different geographical population groups differently (including possibly discriminating against certain groups)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Have there been or are there likely to be any public concerns (including media, academic, voluntary or sector specific interest) about the policy or proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is there potential for or evidence that the proposed policy or proposal will not promote equality of opportunity or promote good relations between different groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please explain responses above</b>		
<p>The policy sets out the provisions for new parent leave and pay (previously titled or known as ‘Paternity Leave’ or ‘Maternity Support Leave’). It seeks to be flexible, fair, and supportive and is part of a suite of policies providing support and benefits to employees with parenting or caring responsibilities</p> <p>The Trust believes in treating people fairly and values diversity. These principles will apply in the application of this policy and guidance. The Trust wishes to support new parents to continue working for the Trust. The Trust encourages staff to prepare and support staff when they welcome a new child into their family.</p> <p>There are not likely to be any public concerns about this policy. There is no indication that people from different groups would have different requirements under this policy other than those who are becoming a new parent.</p> <p>It is not likely that people from different geographical locations will be affected differently.</p>		