

Paternity/Co-Parent Leave Policy and Procedure

Effective 05/04/2025

Policy

The policy of the University of Cambridge is to provide paternity benefits which comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law and, in most cases, are in excess of statutory requirements.

This policy applies to all employees and aims to inform them of their entitlement to contractual and statutory paternity rights and ensure that these rights are understood.

Paternity/Co-Parent Leave and Pay

Entitlement and criteria

The following employees, who have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing, are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks' paid paternity/co-parent leave under University policy, regardless of their length of service and entitlement to statutory paternity benefits:

- Biological father of the child.
- Spouse, civil partner or partner of the mother or birth parent who themselves expects to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- Employee who is adopting a child but is not taking adoption leave.
- Employee who is having a child via surrogacy but is not taking adoption leave.

The paternity/co-parent leave and pay available consists of any statutory leave and pay that the employee is entitled to and a contractual paternity leave and pay provision.

Statutory Regulations

Employees are encouraged, where possible, to follow the provisions laid down by the following regulations:

- Statutory Paternity Pay Regulations implemented under the Employment Act 2002
- Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002
- Paternity Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2024

Paternity / Co-Parent Leave

Employees can take leave at any time within the first year of the birth or placement for adoption. Employees may choose to take their paternity/co-parenting leave in either one block of up to 12 weeks or two separate blocks. Leave should be taken in weekly blocks, which can start on any day of the week, subject to the following provisions:

- Notification of entitlement to statutory paternity/co-parent leave and the expected week of the child's birth (CHRIS/65) must be given no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or within 7 days of the date the adoption agency or local authority tells the person adopting the child they have been matched with the child. In surrogacy cases, the employee needs to confirm that they intend to apply for a parental order within 6 months of the child's birth.
- Employees should discuss the timing of their paternity/co-parent leave with their Head of Institution or line manager as far in advance as possible to help ensure that it meets their needs and minimises any operational disruption. The manager cannot ask the employee to change the requested dates of two of the weeks of their

paternity/co-parent leave (as this is the employee's statutory entitlement). The timing of the other 10 weeks of paternity/co-parent leave should be discussed and agreed between the manager and the employee.

- Notification (form CHRIS/65) of the dates intended to be taken as paternity/co-parent leave must be provided no later than 28 days before the earliest date of each intended period of leave, or within 7 days of notification by an adoption agency or local authority of being matched with a child. If this timeframe is not reasonably practicable to achieve, then notice must be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- An employee may vary their planned leave date by providing at least 28 days' notice of the variation using form CHRIS/65.
- Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth or placement for adoption but must be completed within 52 weeks of the actual date of birth/placement of the child. If the child is born early, leave must be taken within the period from the actual date of birth up to 52 weeks after the expected date of birth.
- 12 weeks of leave are available to employees irrespective of whether more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy or more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement.

Paternity/Co-Parent Pay

Employees who apply for paternity/co-parent leave and meet the University criteria (i.e. that satisfactory arrangements can be made to cover for the absence at no extra cost to the University) will receive up to 12 weeks leave at full pay.

Notification

Employees should give notice of their entitlement to statutory paternity/co-parent pay specifying the date of the expected birth, using the CHRIS/65 form no later than the 15th week before the baby is expected or within 7 days of the date the adoption agency or local authority tells the person adopting they have been matched with the child. In surrogacy cases, the employee needs to confirm that they intend to apply for a parental order within 6 months of the child's birth.

An employee must provide no less than 28 days' notice before the earliest date of each intended period of leave or within 7 days of notification by an adoption agency or local authority of being matched with a child. If, for any reason, they wish to change the start date of the leave period, they should give 28 days' notice of the change unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Confirmation of leave

On receipt of the paternity/co-parent leave application form, the Human Resources Division will write to the employee confirming that leave has been granted.

Change in circumstances

Whilst for many this is a time of planning and excitement, there may be unforeseen circumstances that could make it a very difficult time. In the following situations, paternity/co-parent rights still apply, and leave must be taken within 8 weeks of the event occurring:

- the employee is notified that the child will no longer be placed with the person with whom the child was to be placed for adoption; or
- (in surrogacy cases) a parental order is not sought within six months of birth; or
- (in surrogacy cases) an application for a parental order is refused; or

- the child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy; or
- the child only survives for a short period after the birth; or
- the child is returned after being placed for adoption.

Employees may also be entitled to parental bereavement leave and pay. Please refer to the section on Parental Bereavement Leave in the Special Leave Policy.

Time off for antenatal appointments

Employees who are expectant fathers or partners may take unpaid time off during working hours on up to two occasions to accompany their pregnant partner/the child's mother to antenatal appointments. Please refer to the Maternity Leave Policy.

Neonatal care leave

An employee is entitled to take neonatal care leave if their baby receives neonatal or palliative care for a continuous period of 7 days or more in the 28 days following birth. Neonatal care leave is in addition to paternity/co-parent leave. Details of the leave and pay available are given in the Special Leave Policy.

Benefits during leave

During paternity/co-parent leave, the contract of employment continues in force. All terms and conditions of the contract continue with the exception of stipend or salary. Continuity of service is maintained and any standard incremental progression taking place during the paternity/co-parent leave will be implemented.

Effect on sabbatical leave

For academic staff with an entitlement to leave under Special Ordinance C (i) 1, all terms during which paternity/co-parent leave is taken will counted as reckonable service for sabbatical leave purposes.

Pension implications

For members of both USS and CPS, during any period of paid paternity/co-parent leave pension benefits are accrued as if the member is at work.

However, it is recommended that any member of staff who has queries on their pension entitlement should contact the Pensions Office for information.

Annual leave accrual

Annual leave entitlement as stated in the relevant contract of employment will continue to accrue as normal for the entire period of paternity/co-parent leave.

Support during Paternity/Co-Parent Leave

An employee who is due to go on, or is currently taking paternity/co-parent leave, is entitled to access all the usual support networks available to staff. This includes those within their Department (e.g. Departmental Administrator), within HR (e.g. HR Business Partnering team), the Occupational Health Service and Counselling Service.

Statutory entitlements on return to work

- Emergency leave: All employees have a statutory right to short periods of unpaid leave in order to make arrangements to deal with family emergencies. In addition to this statutory provision Heads of Institution have discretion to grant compassionate leave where circumstances justify so doing.
- Ordinary parental leave: All employees who have a year's service have a statutory right to parental leave.

- Flexible working: All employees have a statutory right to make a flexible working request.

Repayment

If an employee decides not to return to work after paternity/co-parent leave or returns to work but subsequently decides not to continue in the employment of the University for a period of at least three months, the University has the right to reclaim any contractual paternity/co-parent pay paid in addition to any Statutory Paternity Pay entitlement.

The amount reclaimed will be a proportion of this excess contractual pay as follows:

No return or up to one month	All contractual paternity/co-parent pay
One month up to two months	Two-thirds of contractual paternity/co-parent pay
Two months up to three months	One-third of contractual paternity/co-parent pay

In exercising this right to reclaim pay, the University will take into account personal circumstances.

Other family-related leave

- [Adoption leave policy and procedure](#)
- [Maternity leave policy and procedure](#)
- [Shared Parental Leave](#)
- [Returning Carers Scheme](#)

Reference Documents

- [CHRIS/65 Paternity Leave Application](#)