



PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

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PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 NHS 24 recognises that work and parenthood can create conflicting pressures. Parents need time with their children and time to create a supportive home in which their children can thrive. Parental leave is therefore aimed at encouraging a culture of flexible working practices to allow all employees to balance family and work commitments, and thus improving their participation within the workplace.

NHS 24's Parental Leave Policy is based on statutory entitlements but also adds elements to reflect the needs and requirements of employees and the service.

Several other policies have also been developed within NHS 24 in support of working parents such as:

- Maternity Leave/Pay
- Dependants Leave
- Special Leave
- Paternity Leave

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The scheme applies to all employees, whether full time or part time, who have responsibility to caring for a child under the age of 14 years. Employees are required to have one year's continuous qualifying service by the time they wish to take the leave.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Parental leave is aimed at encouraging a culture of flexible working practice to allow all employees to balance family and work commitments, thus improving their participation within the workplace.

4. ENTITLEMENT

- To be entitled to parental leave an employee must be a parent (named on the birth certificate) or guardian of a child who is under the age of fourteen, or have established parental or equivalent caring responsibility for that child.
- In cases of adoption, for eight years after the child is first placed with the family for adoption (or until the child's 18th birthday, if that comes sooner).
- In cases of a child with a disability, up until the child's 18th birthday (for the purposes of parental leave, a disabled child is one for whom disability living allowance is paid).

Employees who meet the above requirements will be entitled to thirteen weeks leave for each child (eighteen weeks if the child is disabled). The first week of any such leave will be paid at normal rate (plus enhancements where applicable). The remaining twelve weeks will be unpaid. This parental leave may be taken as:

- a single block of 13 weeks
- as an annual allowance; or
- any other individual arrangements agreed in advance between the employee and the line manager, e.g. reduced working hours.

5. NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE

5.1 An employee who intends to exercise the right to parental leave must apply by notifying his/her immediate line manager/team leader in writing, before the intended date for commencing parental leave (See Appendix 1). Employees must include in this letter the proposed dates for commencing and returning from parental leave. In order to assist with service provision, employees are required to give 21 days' notice. Employees who are requesting more than four weeks leave, at any given time, are required to give a minimum of 2 months notice of their intention to take parental leave. There will be rare cases, however, where such notice cannot be given. In these cases employees should give the notice as soon as reasonably practicable.

5.2 The immediate manager and the employee must discuss the terms on which the employee will exercise the right to parental leave (e.g. is it to be taken as a single block, as an annual allowance or under any other reasonable individual arrangement). The 'Approved Leave' Pro-Forma should then be completed (See Appendix 2). The employee's manager should confirm this in writing within two weeks of receiving the application once leave has been authorised by an Associate Director of Operations and Nursing or appropriate Director. A copy of the leave application form should be sent to the Human Resource Department and the Central Resource Team. In turn, the Human Resources Department will update the Personnel Management Information System (CIPHR). The Human Resource Department will also be responsible for informing payroll of the changes (See Appendix 3)

5.3 The employee must also provide appropriate documentation, e.g. a copy of the birth certificate of the child for whom they are applying for parental leave, or copies of the adoption papers. The employee only has to provide this information on the first occasion of applying for parental leave.

5.4 If a father is applying for parental leave around the time of the birth of his child, he may be required to produce a copy of the MAT B1 certificate.
(A MAT B1 certificate is issued by a GP or midwife, confirming the expected date of childbirth.)

6. NOTIFICATION OF POSTPONEMENT OF PARENTAL LEAVE

6.1 In exceptional circumstances, due to the needs of the service, the employee may be asked to postpone his/her parental leave until a later date, or to negotiate alternative arrangements. Parental Leave will not normally be authorised between December and January each year for operational reasons. Postponement would only take place after discussion with the employee

- 6.2** The leave will not be postponed for more than six months from the date on which the employee wanted to start parental leave. The manager and the employee should try to agree a suitable time, but if they cannot the manager becomes responsible for guaranteeing that the employee can take the leave at a time, no more than six months ahead, which best fits the needs of the service and the employee. If this means that leave is postponed beyond the fourteen year age limit the parent still has a right to take it.
- 6.3** The manager should confirm the postponement arrangements in writing no later than 7 days after the employee's notice to take leave is given (See Appendix 4) . The manager should clearly state the reasons for the postponement. In addition to this, the new dates when the employee may take parental leave should be specified, ensuring that the length of this leave is equivalent to the employee's original request.

7. RIGHT TO RETURN

In applying for parental leave, employees are entitled to return to their existing jobs.

When parental leave follows maternity leave, the employee is entitled to return to the same job which he/she had been employed in before the leave.

It is good practice for the manager to ensure that that the employee is kept updated on any developments, actual or proposed, which occur during the period of parental leave.

8. CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

Absence on parental leave will not break continuity of service.

An employee's contract of employment will continue during the whole period of parental leave, unless either party expressly terminates it by dismissal or resignation.

All contractual rights are retained during the period of leave, except those relating to remuneration.

9. EMPLOYEES WHO CHANGE JOBS

In some circumstances, employees who commence employment may previously have been entitled to receive, and have taken, their full entitlement to parental leave with another employer. In these cases, employees cannot receive any further entitlement to parental leave, unless they have another child for whom they have not previously received parental leave. In appropriate cases NHS 24 may write to the employee's previous employer to confirm whether or not the full entitlement to parental leave was taken.

If an employee leaves employment, NHS 24 will provide, if requested, a record of the employee's parental leave.

10. SICK LEAVE

If an employee becomes ill during a period of parental leave and produces medical evidence to confirm this, this will be regarded as sick leave and the period of parental leave will be given at a later date.

If an employee fails to return to work on the notified date and submits the appropriate medical certificate, the provisions of the Occupational and Statutory Sick Pay schemes will apply.

Absence on parental leave will count as service for the purpose of satisfying qualification for sick pay entitlement based on years of service, in accordance with General Whitley Council provisions.

11. INCREMENTS

Absence on parental leave will count towards the normal annual increments on an employee's scale, in accordance with General Whitley Council terms and conditions of service. Normal incremental dates will not be deferred. Similarly, normal annual pay uplifts will apply.

12. ANNUAL LEAVE

A period of parental leave will count towards the calculation of annual leave entitlement, in accordance with General Whitley Council terms and conditions of service and the contract of employment.

13. SUPERANNUATION

Employees who are contributing to the superannuation scheme, and who wish to remain in the scheme, will have to pay the contributions owed for the weeks of parental leave. This may be done through one of two methods: either paying them as a lump sum when you return to work, or as additional contributions to be recovered in the remainder of the current financial year.

It is strongly recommended that the employee raises this matter with the Payroll Department and obtains mutual agreement on the chosen means of repayment before commencing parental leave, since significant underpayment of superannuation contributions might otherwise accrue.

14. NATIONAL INSURANCE

National Insurance contributions are paid during the first week of parental leave. They are not payable for periods of unpaid leave such as the remaining twelve weeks parental leave.

15. REVIEW

This policy will be monitored for effectiveness and reviewed after two years in conjunction with the Partnership Forum.

APPENDIX 1

To: Line Manager/Team Leader

From:

Date:

APPLICATION FOR PARENTAL LEAVE

I refer to the Policy & Procedure for parental leave and wish to apply for a period of parental leave.

I would wish the period of parental leave to commence on **(start date)** until the **(end date)**. I would therefore be returning to work on **(date of return to work)**.

I confirm that I understand and accept the conditions that apply during this period of parental leave, as stated in the Policy & Procedure on Parental Leave, and that the first week of the leave will be paid. The remaining period of leave will be unpaid.

To date, whether with this employer or a previous employer, I have had the following periods of parental leave:

Dates (to and from):

Details:

My staff payroll number is:

Yours sincerely

(NAME)

APPROVED AUTHORISED LEAVE

Part A: To Be Completed By Employee

Where an employee is requesting any form of leave other than annual leave. , i.e., leave for off line activities, study leave or facilities time, compassionate leave, unpaid leave, dependents leave, parental leave etc.

Please complete Part A indicating the category of leave requested and pass to your TL / Line Manager for approval

The Team Leader/Line Manager should then complete Part B of the form and submit to CRT **for updating in Q-Max and HR Services for filing and the actioning of any unpaid leave.**

All requests whether approved or NOT approved must be returned to HR Services for monitoring in accordance with Equal Opportunities Legislation.

Name Of Employee			
Location		Employee Payroll Number:	
	Dates Requested	From	To Paid/Unpaid*
Half Shift	Dates Requested	From	To Paid/Unpaid*
Total Hours Requested(Front Line)		Total days Requested (Non frontline)	

* Delete As Appropriate
CATEGORY OF LEAVE

Category of Authorised Leave Approved	Please indicate
Parental Leave	
Compassionate Leave/Bereavement Leave	
Dependants Leave	
Fostering Leave	
Adoption Leave	
Paternity leave	
Unpaid Leave	
Special Leave: Domestic Situation Jury Service Civic and Public Duties Voluntary Emergency Services Reserve Services	

Comments: *(please give as much detail regarding the reason for request)*

Part B: Line Manager Authorisation

Having considered the above request for leave:

I Approve * / Do not approve (please circle your decision) this request.

If approval is declined, please state the reasons for this.

Authorising Team Leader / Line Manager:

Signature:

Print Name:

Date

Authorising ADON/Director in cases where extended periods of leave is requested,
whether paid or unpaid:

Signature:

Date

Print Name

RETURN APPROVED REQUESTS TO CRT & HR SERVICES

RETURN NON-APPROVED REQUESTS TO HR SERVICES

Appendix 3

Payroll – NHS National Services
Payroll
Gyle Square
South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

Date

Dear

Re: Parental Leave, (name of employee and pay number)

I have authorised the above member of staff to take a period of unpaid leave in accordance with NHS 24 Policy & Procedure on Parental Leave. The dates are as detailed in the attached correspondence.

I would be grateful if you could process this accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

HUMAN RESOURCES

APPENDIX 4

To: Employee's Name

Site:

From: Line Manager

Date:

RE: APPLICATION FOR PARENTAL LEAVE – POSTPONEMENT

I refer to your request for a period of parental leave and our recent discussion. In accordance with Section 6 of the Policy & Procedure on Parental Leave, I now write to confirm that unfortunately this period of parental leave is to be postponed in light of:

Details:

I confirm that the new dates that you will take the period of parental leave will begin on **(start date)** until **(end date)** and that you will return to work on **(date)**.

Yours sincerely,

LINE MANAGER

Action By Line Manager:

- Copy to Human Resource Department
- Copy to Central Resource Team