

Paternity Leave Policy

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A paternity leave policy is the written statement of how your organisation handles time off for employees whose partner is having a baby, or who are becoming a parent through adoption or surrogacy — who qualifies, how they give notice, how leave can be taken, and what they are paid.

Paternity leave is short compared with maternity leave, which is exactly why it goes wrong: managers treat it informally, notice never gets recorded, and payroll finds out after the event. A written policy makes a small entitlement run smoothly and signals that your organisation expects new parents to actually take it.

This template gives you a ready-to-edit policy covering eligibility, notification, how leave blocks work, pay, and the interaction with shared parental leave.

Purpose and scope

This policy explains how [Your company] manages statutory paternity leave and pay. It applies to employees who are the father of a child, the partner of someone giving birth, or a parent through adoption or surrogacy, and who meet the eligibility conditions on GOV.UK.

Policy statement

[Your company] encourages eligible employees to take their full paternity leave entitlement. Taking paternity leave will never count against an employee in pay, promotion, or performance decisions, and managers are expected to plan cover rather than lean on new parents to shorten or cancel leave.

Who is eligible

Eligibility for statutory paternity leave and pay depends on the employee's relationship to the child and the other parent, length of service, and earnings. The conditions are set by government and updated periodically — [name/role] checks the current rules on GOV.UK when a request comes in, rather than relying on this document for figures.

Employees who do not qualify for the statutory scheme can discuss alternatives with [name/role], such as annual leave or [unpaid leave arrangement].

Giving notice

- Tell [your manager or name/role] as early as practical that you expect to take paternity leave — early notice makes cover planning easier for everyone.
- Formal notice of the expected week of childbirth (or matching date for adoption) and your intended leave dates must be given by the statutory deadline on GOV.UK, using [form/system].
- We confirm the agreed dates and expected pay in writing within [number] days.
- If the birth date moves, tell us as soon as you can and we will adjust dates without fuss.

Taking paternity leave

Statutory paternity leave is taken in whole weeks and, under the current rules, can be split into separate blocks and taken at any point within the statutory window after the birth or placement — check GOV.UK for the current window and block rules. Leave cannot start before the child is born or placed.

Employees on paternity leave remain employed on their normal terms apart from pay, and annual leave continues to accrue.

Paternity pay

Eligible employees receive statutory paternity pay at the current government rate — payroll applies the figures published on GOV.UK. [If [Your company] enhances paternity pay, state the amount and any conditions here; otherwise state that paternity pay is at the statutory rate.]

Interaction with other leave

- Paternity leave is separate from shared parental leave — an employee may be able to take both, but the sequencing rules matter, so check GOV.UK and our shared parental leave policy before booking.
- Time off to accompany a partner to antenatal appointments, or to attend adoption appointments, is covered by statutory rights — see GOV.UK for the current entitlement and speak to [name/role] to arrange it.
- Emergencies involving the child after the employee is back at work fall under our time off for dependants policy.

Records and review

Notices, confirmation letters, and pay records are kept in [system/location]. This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] and whenever the statutory scheme changes. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Check the current entitlement, eligibility, and pay rules on GOV.UK before publishing — paternity rules have changed recently and are easy to state stale.
2. Decide whether to enhance paternity pay; if the answer is no, say so plainly rather than leaving the section vague.
3. Set a realistic internal notice route ([form/system]) and make sure payroll is copied automatically.
4. Align this policy with your shared parental leave policy so the two do not contradict each other on sequencing.
5. Tell managers explicitly that leaning on staff to shorten paternity leave is a policy breach, not a scheduling technique.

Official guidance

- › [GOV.UK — Paternity pay and leave](https://gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave)

› [GOV.UK — Shared parental leave and pay](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/paternity-leave-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.