

INTRODUCTION

Our Paternity Policy is designed to help you understand how much leave and pay you are entitled to receive, how to apply for leave and what support is available to you.

Because we recognise how precious this time is, we are pleased to offer our people an enhanced entitlement in addition to the statutory amount from your first day with us.

Please note you may also be entitled to Shared Parental Leave and Pay. Please refer to the Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy or contact the HR Support Centre.

As this policy doesn't form part of your contract of employment it may be amended at any time.

Entitlement to Paternity Leave

You will need to meet each of the following eligibility criteria ***for us to be able to process a paternity request and therefore qualify for paternity leave and pay:***

- You have, or expect to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child.
- You are either the biological father of the child, or you are married to, the civil partner or the cohabiting partner of the child's mother, or you are married to, the civil partner or the cohabiting partner of the child's adopter, or you are one of a couple jointly adopting a child. A cohabiting partner is a person, whether of a different sex or the same sex, who lives with the mother or adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but is not an immediate relative of the mother or adopter.

You are taking the leave to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adopter. ***There is no length of service eligibility and providing you meet the above criteria; you are entitled to receive eight weeks Company Paternity Pay from day one.***

Notification

You will need to have told us of your intention to take paternity leave by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or, in the case of an adopted child, no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

Our Paternity Leave/Pay Application Form* will need to be completed for the first 2 weeks of paternity leave which incorporates your statutory entitlement. You can find this on the Fort or from the HR team. Requests to use the additional 6 weeks paternity leave can then be made via your Line Manager and discussed with the HR Team.

When submitting the Paternity Leave/Pay Application Form, please provide evidence of your partners due date/adoption placement i.e., a photo of your partners MATB1 certificate (medical certificate stating expected week of childbirth from the midwife after the 20th week of pregnancy) or a letter from the adoption agency or adoption matching certificate.

You can bring forward your paternity leave start date, but must have notified us, in writing, at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. You may also postpone your paternity leave start date, provided you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the original proposed start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

**When this form is used, personal data will be collected from you to self-certify that you meet the eligibility criteria for Company Paternity Pay, as outlined above. This information is collected on Government advice and stored securely on our HR/Payroll system. Completed forms should be returned to your line manager. Where personal data is obtained, it will be used and stored in accordance with our Employee Privacy Notice, Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy, and current privacy laws. These policies and privacy notices are used for exercising obligations and rights in connection with your employment.*

Taking Paternity Leave

If you are **expecting a baby/adoption placement on or after the 1 July 2022 and you meet the eligibility criteria outlined above**, you are entitled to take eight weeks paternity leave.

The first two weeks should be taken on the date the child is born or placed for adoption (whether this is earlier or later than expected) where possible. This is because Statutory Paternity Leave must be completed within **56 days of the actual date of childbirth or adoption** (or, if the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of childbirth up to 56 days after the first day of the expected week of childbirth). **The first two weeks should be taken as a block.**

The additional six weeks paternity leave must be taken as whole days within twelve months of the baby being born/adoption placement. You should discuss and agree how you wish to use the six weeks with your manager to make sure this works for you and the business.

Examples of how you could take your eight weeks paternity leave include:

- **Taking two weeks paternity leave when the baby is born/ placed for adoption followed by two or three days per month up to the baby's first birthday**
- **Taking eight consecutive weeks of paternity leave, subject to approvals**

Although we will endeavour to support your requests to use the additional six weeks paternity leave on specific dates, there may be occasion where we need to discuss and agree alternative dates due to business need.

Please provide adequate notice to your manager to ensure cover can be arranged for any requests. Requests to use the additional 6 weeks paternity leave can then be made via your Line Manager and discussed with the HR Team.

If you are off sick when you are planning to take paternity leave, paternity leave can be postponed. The first two weeks must however be taken within eight weeks of the baby's birth and the remaining six within twelve months of the baby's birth, subject to correct notification/authorisation.

If you have multiple births from the same pregnancy, only one period of paternity leave is available.

During your period of paternity leave, your contract of employment continues, and you are entitled to receive all your contractual benefits, except for salary* **and incentive payments, for the duration of the period of leave.** Any benefits-in-kind will continue, contractual annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue, and pension contributions will continue to be made.

*Salary will be replaced by Company Paternity Pay (CPP) if you are eligible to receive it.

Company Paternity Pay (CPP)

We offer Company Paternity Pay (CPP) which consists of up to eight weeks' full basic pay* (inclusive of **two weeks** Statutory Paternity Pay).

***Based on your pre-salary sacrifice salary.**

CPP can start from any day of the week in line with the date you start your paternity leave. **We will pay this** for up to eight weeks of paternity leave. It is only payable for weeks that you do not work.

CPP is intended to support and encourage employees who wish to continue their careers with Fortem after paternity, and payment of CPP is therefore conditional upon you returning to work for Fortem for at least six months following the last day of paternity leave. If you do not return to work for this minimum period, any CPP (but not SPP) must be repaid.

Please note: if you have salary sacrifice arrangements, these will continue during paternity leave.

Returning to Work

When you come back from paternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job on the same Terms and Conditions of Employment as if you had not been absent.

Special Note for EEA and rest of world workers

If you are an EEA **or rest of the world** worker, then the Company may need to notify the Home Office of your absence.

Where applicable, **we ask that** you ensure your right to work in the UK status does not lapse during your paternity leave.

If your annual documentation check falls within the paternity leave period, we will ask you to present your right to work documents to us before you commence leave. Upon return, we will re-check that you still have the right to work in the UK.

Fertility Treatment

We recognise the emotional and physical challenges that can arise from fertility treatment, which is why we offer support to anyone, regardless of length of service or whether you are starting or continuing your fertility treatment journey. You are encouraged to discuss what support may be needed, including any time off or additional concerns with your manager and/or a member of the HR Team as early as possible so that they can be agreed with you. Please be assured that all conversations will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Pregnancy Loss

We refer to pregnancy loss as the loss of a baby due to miscarriage through to the loss of a baby up to 28 days after birth.

We recognise pregnancy loss as a bereavement, and not isolated to affecting just women or heterosexual couples. Therefore, we offer support to anyone who suffers the loss of a pregnancy, whether it happens directly to you, your partner or your baby's surrogate mother, regardless of the nature of your loss or your length of service.

We will always try to be reasonable and flexible with the amount of time off you are able to take which will be based on your individual circumstances and at the discretion of your MD/Functional Head.

If you are affected by pregnancy loss, please get in touch with your line manager or a member of the HR team who will be able to offer guidance on related entitlements.

Please note: Where there is a statutory requirement for leave and/or pay, we will always ensure that this is given.

Further support is available to you via your Private Medical Insurance (if applicable) and WeCare which can be found on the Fort under our benefits section.