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Parental Leave Policy

This policy sets out what employees can expect if they have parental responsibilities and want to take Parental Leave.

It explains:

- The roles and responsibilities of employees and line managers
- How to request time off to care for the child concerned

This policy covers employees in Great Britain, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Gibraltar, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This policy is not contractual and is subject to change at the Group's discretion. This policy will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it reflects the Group's legal obligations and its business needs.

Content of this policy:

1. Employees
2. Line Managers
3. Actions for employees: Requesting Parental Leave
4. Further Information and support

1. Employees

If you're considering applying for Parental Leave, it's your responsibility to read and follow the guidance in this Parental Leave Policy:

In GB, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Gibraltar and Northern Ireland:

What are you entitled to?

You can take **up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave**, until the child's 18th birthday. You can take separate Parental Leave for each child born, adopted or placed with you for adoption.

Is there a maximum period of leave?

Each year, you can take up to four weeks' Parental Leave for every child. There are some conditions:

A) If you already have a child that meets the criteria, the year will start when you have reached 12 months' continuous service.

Or

B) If you don't have a child at the moment, but do have 12 months' continuous service, the year will start from the date the child is born or placed for adoption.

Is there a minimum period of leave?

Yes - it needs to be taken in one week blocks.

However, there is an exception. If a child receives a disability living allowance, parents can take Parental Leave one day at a time, or for longer periods.

In Republic of Ireland:

What are you entitled to?

You can take **up to 26 weeks unpaid Parental Leave** until the child's 18th birthday. You can take separate Parental Leave for each child born, adopted or placed with you for adoption.

In addition, and under the Parental Leave Scheme, you can **take up to 2 weeks Parental Leave** prior to your child's first birthday, which will be paid in line with the statutory rate. More information about this leave is available in the maternity, paternity or adoption policy and support packs.

Is there a maximum period of leave?

You can choose to take the leave as a continuous block of 26 weeks. However, if you qualify for Parental Leave for more than one child, you can't take more than 26 weeks' Parental Leave in any 12 month period.

Is there a minimum period of leave?

Yes - it needs to be taken in one week blocks.

However, there is an exception. If a child receives a disability living allowance, parents can take Parental Leave one day at a time, or for longer periods.

What length of service is required to qualify?

In GB, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Gibraltar and Northern Ireland:

You'll need one year's continuous employment with the Group when you take the leave.

In Republic of Ireland:

You'll usually need at least one year's continuous employment with the Group when you take the leave. However, if you have more than three months' continuous service, and the child is approaching 18, you can take one week's leave for every full month of continuous employment with the Group.

How to request Parental Leave

- Make sure you're eligible before you fill out your request. (see above)
- Go to workday and submit your request. This must be done at least 21 days before you'd like your leave to start
- Upload proof of your entitlement to Parental Leave to workday. This could be a birth certificate or a certificate of adoption
- If we can't grant leave on your requested dates, talk to your line manager about alternative dates

How are holidays treated?

You will continue to accrue holiday entitlement when you're on a period of Parental Leave.

2. Line Managers

To help you in managing a Parental Leave application, read and follow the guidance in this Parental Leave policy.

How to manage a request for Parental Leave

- Discuss the request with your employee to understand their need
- Ask your employee to upload evidence of their parental responsibilities (such as a birth certificate or certificate of adoption) to workday
- Consider other requests for time off work from your team and how this may impact the period requested
- Consider whether your team are able to cover essential work for the period of absence and any impact on the customer

If you're approving leave:

- Review the request, complete the administration checks and approve the leave on workday

Can you postpone a request for Parental Leave?

Sometimes you may have to postpone the request. Leave can only be postponed for up to six months.

You could postpone leave for a number of reasons. For example:

- The period is at a peak business time
- A number of the team have applied for leave at the same time
- Because of the job the employee does, taking leave at that time would have a negative effect on the business and ultimately the customer

You should discuss the reasons for postponing the leave with your employee and then confirm the postponement arrangements in workday. This needs to happen within:

- Seven days of the employee applying for leave (UK)
- Two weeks after receiving the request from the employee or at least four weeks before the leave is due to commence (ROI)

It's important that as the line manager, you set out objective, justifiable business reasons for postponement. You must consult and agree with the employee, the dates (beginning and end) when the employee will take the leave. The amount of leave must be equivalent to the period the employee originally applied for. You need to keep the documents which support the decision to postpone leave, in case the decision is challenged.

If the postponement goes past the end of the employee's entitlement period, the employee can still take the leave.

You can't postpone Parental Leave if it begins on the date the child is born, or the date a child is placed with them for adoption.

What about flexible working employees?

Flexible working employees are entitled to leave in proportion to the time they work.

Someone, for example, who works two days a week, is eligible for a maximum of 18 of their two day working weeks.

We calculate a week by dividing the number of days worked in a year by 52.

If an employee works four days a week for 40 weeks of school term time but not during 12 weeks of school holidays, they'd be entitled to 18 x 40 (number of weeks worked) divided by 52. This gives 14 weeks of Parental Leave as we round the number up to the nearest whole week. What happens if the employee needs more time off?

The employee should discuss this with you. You may be able to help, perhaps by the employee working more flexibly and using annual leave.

What happens if the employee doesn't return to work on the agreed date?

We might consider this as an unauthorised absence unless this has been agreed in advance or they couldn't return because of sickness. This would be investigated under the Group's disciplinary procedure.

3. Actions for employees

Requesting Parental Leave

What pay, pension and benefits will employees receive?

- Employees don't receive any salary while they're on Parental Leave. Pension funding and any benefit funding will continue
- Employees will continue to receive all benefits they have elected via RBS*elect* and charges for these options will continue to be taken from the employee's Value Account.

4. Further information and support is available

Further support is available through our Employee Assistance Programme (HR>HR Information>Wellbeing).