



## **Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Other Parental and Carer's Leave Policy**

### **Scope of Policy**

The policy applies to all employees of Priory Medical Group.

Priory Medical Group recognise the importance of supporting its employees during their or their partner's pregnancy, as well as supporting those going through the adoption process.

It should be an exciting time for all those involved, and here at PMG we endeavour where possible to support you before, during and after so that you can enjoy this precious time as much as possible.

### **Maternity Leave\*\***

(\*\*Pregnant employees will be entitled to take 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave, irrespective of their length of service or the number of hours worked each week.)

You may not return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth of your child (four weeks for women who work in factories).

You are free to choose when you would like your maternity leave to start, however, the earliest you can choose to start your maternity leave is during the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of your child's birth.

In certain circumstances, your maternity leave may start automatically earlier than the date you chose as the start date for your maternity leave. This applies where you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy at any time during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth or if you give birth early.

## **Maternity Pay\***

**(\*For your individual statutory or enhanced maternity pay entitlements please see your contract of employment)**

If you have at least 26 weeks' service by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your child is expected to be born, you may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), provided your average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

SMP (or enhanced organisational maternity pay depending on your employment contract) is payable for 39 weeks. If your average weekly earnings fall below the standard rate, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings throughout.

SMP will be paid subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

## **Notification of Pregnancy.**

To be eligible for maternity leave and SMP, you are required to notify your line manager or HR in writing by or during the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of your child's birth. However, for us to ensure your health and safety at work and to be able to make necessary arrangements to cover your role whilst you take leave, we would appreciate it if we can be notified as soon as possible.

Once we are aware that you are pregnant we will arrange for a pregnancy risk assessment to be completed between yourself and your Line Manager/Supervisor. Any risks identified will be mitigated and any reasonable adjustments required will be executed to help to always ensure yours and your baby's safety whilst you are at work.

You must inform your Line Manager or HR of the following:

- **you are pregnant.**
- **the week in which your child is due.**
- **the date you intended to start your maternity leave.**
- **the date from which you intend for your maternity leave to end.**
- **If you wish to use your holiday entitlement before or after your maternity leave.**



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You should forward your MAT B1 certificate signed by your registered doctor or registered midwife to confirm the expected week of childbirth as soon as you are provided with it (usually after 21 weeks of your pregnancy).

### **Changes to Leave Start and End Dates**

You may change the date you start your maternity leave providing you give at least 28 days' notice in writing of either the new start date or the original start date (whichever is earliest).

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, the Company shall notify you in writing of the date when your maternity leave will end.

Prior to your departure on maternity leave, your line manager will meet with you to discuss your rights and entitlements during maternity leave, the possibility of flexible working on your return to work and the level of contact you would like with the Company during your maternity leave. You should feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Your line manager may also offer you up to 10 days Keep in Touch days (**KIT DAYS**) during your maternity leave. It is up to you if you wish to work these days as they are optional. Keeping in Touch (KIT) days during maternity leave don't have to be full days. Even if you only work part of a day, it still counts as one full KIT Day out of the ten allowed. The rate of pay for the work will be agreed in advance with you. Your right to maternity leave and SMP will not be affected.

During your Maternity Leave, you will continue to receive your contractual benefits, and your normal terms and conditions will continue to apply, except for those terms relating to wages and salary as you will be paid the maternity pay as per contract of employment. You will continue to accrue holiday.

If you have concerns about your own health and safety at any time you should consult your Line Manager or HR immediately.

You do not have to notify the Company separately of your return date. It will be assumed that you will come back to work on the date the Company has notified you is the end of your maternity leave period.



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However, if you wish to return to work before the end of your full maternity leave entitlement, you should give your line manager at least 8 weeks' notice in writing of your intended return date.

If you decide not to return to work after maternity leave, you should confirm this in writing and give the notice required by your contract of employment.

On your return from maternity leave, your line manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss any changes which have taken place during your absence. This will be an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to breastfeeding. You should also feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Parallel arrangements are available for the adoption of a child.

### **Maternity and Redundancy**

Employees on maternity leave must give priority for suitable alternative employment in a redundancy situation. From April 2024 that protection applies from when an expectant mother, or those adopting a child or taking shared parental leave, notifies their employer of their pregnancy, match for adoption, intention to take shared parental leave and extends for 18 months from the start of that leave.

### **Paternity Leave and Pay**

Statutory Paternity Leave is a maximum of two weeks' leave, following the birth of a child, taken in order to support the mother or care for the new child. It can be taken as a single week or two consecutive weeks. It cannot be taken as odd days or as two separate weeks.

Statutory Paternity Leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth. If the baby is born earlier than expected, it must be taken within 56 days from the date the baby was due.

To qualify you must have worked for the Company for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected birth week.



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You must provide HR/Payroll with an original copy of your Partner or Surrogate's Mat B1 Form to be eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay.

Statutory Paternity Pay is paid at a fixed rate per week (determined in legislation) or 90% of average earnings if that is less. It is paid less tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

During Statutory Paternity Leave, you are entitled to all your normal contractual terms and conditions as if you were not absent, apart from basic wages and salary as you will be paid Paternity pay in line with your eligibility.

Paternity leave and pay are also available for the adoption of a child.

### **Shared parental leave.**

This leave entitlement is designed to give parents / adopters more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. If you are eligible you can share up to 50 weeks leave, you and your partner can decide to be off work at the same time and/or take it in turns to have periods of leave to look after the child.

To be eligible you must meet the following criteria:

You and your partner may be able to get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) if you're:

- **having a baby**
- **using a surrogate to have a baby.**
- **adopting a child**
- **fostering a child who you're planning to adopt.**

To be eligible for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP), both birth parents must:

- **share responsibility for the child at birth.**
- **meet work and pay criteria - these are different depending on which parent wants to use the shared parental leave and pay.**

You're not eligible if you started sharing responsibility for the child after it was born.

To be eligible for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP), both adoptive parents and both parents using a surrogate must share responsibility for the child from:

- **the child's due date or birth date if you're using a surrogate.**
- **the date the child is placed with you if you're adopting or fostering to adopt.**

In addition to be eligible you must meet the following criteria.

- **Step 1 – Continuity test:** if you are seeking to take shared parental **leave**, one parent / adopter must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before the week in which the child is due (or at the week in which an adopter was notified of having been matched with a child or adoption) and they should still be employed in the first week that shared parental leave is to be taken.  
The other parent /adopter must have worked for 26 weeks in the 66 weeks leading up to the due date and have earned at least £390 in total in 13 of the 66 weeks (add up the highest paying weeks, they don't need to be in a row)
- **Step 2 – Individual eligibility for pay:** To qualify for shared parental **pay** the parent / main adopter must, as well as passing the Continuity test, also have earned an average salary of the National Insurance lower earnings limit or more for the 8 weeks prior to the 15th week before the expected birth / adoption.

### **Redundancy**

All employees on maternity leave must by law be given priority for suitable alternative employment in a redundancy situation. From April 2024 that protection applies from when an expectant mother, or those adopting a child or taking shared parental leave, notifies their employer of their pregnancy, match for adoption, intention to take shared parental leave and then extends for 18 months from the start of that leave.



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### **Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay**

Should you suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, if you have 26 weeks' continuous service with us, you will be entitled to two weeks paid leave at the statutory rate. If you do not meet these criteria, you will still be entitled to unpaid leave.

Your employment rights are protected while on Parental Bereavement Leave. This includes your right to:

- **pay rises.**
- **build up ('accrue') holiday.**
- **return to work.**

You can take 2 weeks' leave from the first day of your employment for each child who has died or was stillborn if you're eligible.

You can take:

- **2 weeks together**
- **2 separate weeks of leave**
- **only one week of leave**

A week is the same number of days that you normally work in a week.

Example

A week of Parental Bereavement Leave would be 2 days if you only work on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The leave:

- **can start on or after the date of the death or stillbirth.**
- **must finish within 56 weeks of the date of the death or stillbirth.**

### **Taking leave with other types of statutory leave**

If you're taking another type of statutory leave (for example, maternity leave or paternity leave) when the child dies or stillbirth happens, your Parental Bereavement Leave must start after the other leave has ended but does not have



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to be taken immediately after. This includes if the statutory leave is for another child.

If your Parental Bereavement Leave is interrupted by the start of another type of statutory leave, you can take your remaining entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave after that other leave has ended.

Your remaining Parental Bereavement Leave must still be taken within 56 weeks of the date of death or stillbirth.

You can take Parental Bereavement Leave between blocks of shared parental leave that you booked before the child died. This includes if the shared parental leave is for another child.

You'll be able to get either Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay or 90% of your average weekly earnings a week (whichever is lower) [if you're eligible](#).

Any money you get is paid the same way as your wages, for example weekly or monthly, along with deductions for tax and National Insurance.

### **Unpaid Parental Leave**

As well as Shared Parental Leave, any eligible employee who has or expects to have responsibility for a child is entitled to take Parental Leave to care for that child. This includes the child's registered father or anyone else who has or expects to have formal parental responsibility for the child.

Parental leave is unpaid. You're entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise).

You must take parental leave as whole weeks (e.g. 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled.

You don't have to take all the leave at once.

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days.

Parental leave applies to each child not to an individual's job.

Employees qualify if all of these apply:





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- they've been in the company for more than a year.
- they're named on the child's birth or adoption certificate, or they have or expect to have parental responsibility.
- they're not self-employed or a 'worker', e.g. an agency worker or contractor.
- they're not a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts)
- the child is under 18 years of age.

We may ask for proof (like a birth certificate) if it's reasonable for us to do so, e.g. we will not ask for proof each time an individual requests parental leave.

### **Unpaid Carer's Leave**

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months.
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).
- care needs because of their old age.

The dependant does not have to be a family member. It can be anyone who relies on them for care.

Employees are entitled to carer's leave from their first day of work for their employer. Their employment rights (like holidays and returning to their job) are protected during carer's leave.

### **How long employees can take.**

Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months. A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

You can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.



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If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

If an employee is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' leave to look after their child. This is separate to carer's leave.

**Last Reviewed 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**Reviewed by Joanne Fox –HR Manager**

**Next Review due 17<sup>t</sup> April 2026**