

Adoption Leave

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take adoption leave. This Policy applies to all Forestry Commission (FC) employees who adopt a child from within the UK, or from overseas, including: those who become legal parents under a surrogacy arrangement; and foster parents who are also prospective adopters under a 'foster to adopt' arrangement.

2. The Principles

The principles of the policy are to:

- support a healthy work/life balance culture at the FC, where employees can take time off for caring responsibilities;
- support the FC's equality and diversity agenda;
- comply with statutory provisions regarding adoption leave and pay; and
- continue your contract of employment and your contractual benefits, with the exception of pay, whilst you are on adoption leave.

3. The Policy

If you are newly matched with and adopt a child, you are entitled to take up to 52 weeks adoption leave. If you are adopting jointly, only one partner in the relationship is eligible to take adoption leave – this individual is known as the 'primary adopter'. If your partner takes adoption leave, you may be eligible to take [paternity leave](#).

The start date for adoption leave is determined as follows:

- For adoption within the UK (excluding surrogacy or 'foster to adopt' arrangements), adoption leave can start on the day the child is placed for adoption or up to 14 days earlier.
- For adoption from overseas, adoption leave can start on the day the child enters Great Britain or on a chosen date no more than 28 days later.
- In a surrogacy situation, adoption leave can start on the day the child is born or the day after.
- In a 'foster to adopt' situation, adoption leave can start from up to 14 days before the child joins the family, initially for fostering.

You are required to comply with the notification requirements set out on Section 2 of [HR Procedure – Adoption Leave](#), in order to be eligible for adoption leave and pay.

For information on contractual and statutory adoption pay, please refer to [HR Procedure – Adoption Leave](#).

You may be eligible to curtail your adoption leave and take shared parental leave (SPL) with your partner. For more information on this, please refer to [HR Policy and HR Procedure – Shared Parental Leave](#).

3.1 Your Responsibilities as an Employee

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of and understand this policy and the associated procedure;
- discuss your adoption leave plans with your line manager, providing the minimum notice requirements as detailed in the adoption procedure;
- provide your manager with a completed adoption leave form and the other required documentation;
- manage and take responsibility for the handover of your current work;
- keep in touch with your manager when on adoption leave; and
- advise your manager as soon as possible if circumstances change and you wish to cancel, or no longer meet the eligibility criteria for, adoption leave or pay.

3.2 Your Responsibilities as a Manager

You are expected to:

- undertake appropriate resource planning when notified of adoption leave;
- send the completed adoption leave form, and the other required documentation, to your dedicated HR Team for action;
- make sure that there is a handover of current work; and
- agree and maintain keep in touch arrangements for those employees taking adoption leave.

3.3 Human Resources Responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- giving advice and guidance on the application of this policy and the associated procedure;
- processing applications for adoption leave and adoption pay;
- answering employee's pay queries and keeping personnel and pay records up-to-date; and
- monitoring and reviewing this policy, and the associated procedure, in consultation with the FC Trade Unions.