

Parental Leave

1. Introduction

Parental leave provides parents with the right to take one or more periods of unpaid leave to take time off to look after your child, make arrangements for your child's welfare or simply to spend more time with your child.

2. Applying for parental leave

A maximum of four weeks leave is allowed each year and you should apply in writing using the Parental Leave Form at least 21 days prior to the date on which your parental leave would start.

Parental leave is unpaid and does not qualify for pensionable service so when your leave is approved your manager will forward the approved form to the [Payroll Team, HR Services](#) to update your pay and pensions records.

2.1 Applying for more than four weeks parental leave

Applications for longer periods of leave will be considered and your manager will consider your application in line with the requirements of the business and the impact of your absence. They will also consult the Unit Manager to ensure the impact on the wider team has been considered when reviewing your application.

If you are applying for a longer period of leave you must give notice that is at least equivalent to the proposed length of your absence.

2.2 Parental leave and maternity/adoption/extended paternity leave

If you are on, or due to go on, maternity/adoption/extended paternity leave, you can apply for a parental leave to extend the amount of time you have off to take care of your child(ren). If you are already on maternity/adoption/extended paternity leave you should ensure that you apply for parental leave no later than 21 days before you are due to return to work.

3. Postponing parental leave

The Forestry Commission (FC) can postpone your leave for up to 6 months if it is not possible for the business to accommodate your absence on the dates proposed. Your manager will discuss any possible postponement with you and will send you written confirmation of the reasons within 7 days of receiving your leave application.

Parental leave will not be postponed if you are requesting to take it immediately following the birth or adoption of a child.

4. Returning to work

If your parental leave was for a period of 4 weeks or less (or immediately following a period of maternity/adoption or additional paternity leave of 26 weeks or less) you are entitled to return to the same job.

If your parental leave was for a period of more than 4 weeks (or immediately following from a period of maternity or adoption leave of more than 26 weeks) you will be entitled to return to the same job but if this is not practicable to a similar job on the same terms and conditions.

Where it is not possible for you to return to the same or similar job, for example, through restructure or redundancy, this will be managed in line with the [Redundancy Policy](#) and [Procedure](#).

5. Record keeping

You need to keep a record of the parental leave you have taken so that successive managers or a new employer is aware of the leave entitlement you have remaining.