

Shared Parental Leave

1. Policy Statement

The Forestry Commission (FC) is committed to being a good, modern employer and to offering employees family-friendly policies that support business needs, employee motivation and work/life balance.

2. Purpose

Shared parental leave (SPL) is a statutory entitlement to flexible parental leave, available to a mother/primary adopter and their partner on an equal basis.

SPL aims to allow working parents to share the care of their child and, specifically, enable working fathers to take a more active childcare role.

Where a mother/primary adopter and their partner meet the qualifying criteria for SPL and shared parental pay (ShPP), the mother/primary adopter can end their maternity/adoption leave and pay, or commit to ending it at a future date, and share the untaken balance as SPL and ShPP.

3. Scope

This Policy and the associated Procedure apply to all FC employees who meet the qualifying criteria for SPL, as set out in Section 2 of [HR Procedure - Shared Parental Leave](#).

3.1 Definitions

In this Policy and the associated Procedure, the following definitions apply:

- Mother – the birth mother of the child
- Primary adopter – the person with whom the adoptive child is expected to be placed and who has primary care for the child
- Partner – the child's biological father or the mother's/primary adopter's partner, who can be their husband/wife, civil partner or partner living in an enduring relationship with them and the child
- Parent – the birth parents, adoptive parents or intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement

- You – the FC employee, regardless of whether you are the Mother, Primary Adopter or Partner
- Expected week of childbirth (EWC) - the week, beginning on a Sunday, in which the doctor/midwife expects the child to be born

4. Policy Principles

The following principles and values underpin this policy:

- Protection –for mothers/primary adopters and their partners after the child's:
 - birth;
 - placement (for adoption within the UK); or
 - arrival in Great Britain (for adoption from overseas)
- Flexibility –for employees, giving a choice on how employment and childcare is shared between a mother/primary adopter and their partner
- Shared responsibility – whereby childcare is more balanced between parents and blocks of leave can be negotiated between working parents and their employer(s)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Your Responsibilities as an Employee

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of and understand this policy and the associated procedure;
- discuss your plans to take SPL with your line manager as early as possible;
- complete the relevant forms, and provide the required notification period(s), as set out in Section 4 of [HR Procedure – Shared Parental Leave](#);
- take responsibility for the handover of your work before a block of SPL; and
- keep in touch with your manager during a block of SPL.

5.2 Your Responsibilities as a Manager

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of and understand this policy and the associated procedure;
- hold an early meeting with the employee to discuss their plans to take SPL;
- consider any request(s) for a discontinuous block of leave and inform the employee of your decision within two weeks of their request;
- undertake appropriate resource planning when an employee provides notice of SPL;
- send copies of all completed relevant forms to your HR Operations Manager for action;
- make sure the employee hands over their work before a block of SPL; and

- agree and maintain keep in touch arrangements for a block of SPL.

5.3 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 SPL and ShPP, keeping personnel and pay records up-to-date, and answering employee's pay queries; and
- monitoring and reviewing this policy and associated procedure, keeping the FCTU informed.