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| PARISH LOGO | Neonatal Care and Leave Policy |

Document Overview

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| **Purpose** | This policy sets out the entitlement to neonatal leave and pay for eligible employees. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the organisation may amend it at any time. This policy applies to all employees with a contract of employment with us. |
| **Confidentiality** | This document is not confidential. |
| **Document owner** |  |
| **Status note** | TEMPLATE DOCUMENT |
| **Distribution** | All staff. |
| **Required action** | Send to all staff |
| **Proposed next step** |  |

Version History

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Status Note** |
| 1.0 | 10/03/2025 | Final |
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1. Introduction
	1. Following the birth of a baby, most parents will expect to spend up to a couple of days in hospital before being discharged and returning home to spend time with their newborn. However, for parents with premature or sick babies the situation may be very different as many of these babies will receive weeks, and in some cases, months of neonatal care.
	2. This means that for the mother, birthing parent or main adopter of those babies, a period of their maternity/adoption leave, and pay is used while the baby is in hospital before they even get to spend time with their newborn. This may often lead to them having to return to work without having spent the normal amount of time with their new babies.
	3. This is also the same for those who take paternity leave or shared parental leave and reduces the amount of time they get to spend with their baby before returning to work. For many parents, therefore, much of their family leave is spent on the neonatal unit, not at home bonding with their babies.
	4. The policy has been developed to support families whose newborn baby (whether by birth or adoption) spends time in neonatal care following birth.
	5. This policy is applicable to all employees whose baby was born on or after 6th April 2025.
2. Definition of Neonatal Care
	1. The definition of neonatal care is where:
		1. Medical care is received in hospital
		2. Medical care is received in any other place which meets this criteria:
			* The baby was an inpatient in hospital and continued care is received upon that baby leaving hospital.
			* The care is under the direction of a Consultant.
			* The care includes ongoing monitoring by, and visits to the baby, from healthcare professionals which has been arranged by the hospital following inpatient treatment.
		3. Where palliative or end of life care is in place.
	2. Where the baby is being transported from one place of neonatal treatment to another place that will deliver neonatal treatment, then neonatal leave will continue uninterrupted.
3. Conditions of Entitlement
	1. To qualify for Neonatal care leave you must be:
		1. The baby’s birth parents.
		2. The partner of the baby’s birth parent who has the main responsibility for the baby’s upbringing, with the exception of the responsibility of the birth parent (same sex or different sex partner) and who lives with the birth parent as part of an enduring family relationship, but does not include the birth parent’s parent, grandparents, grandchild, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.
		3. The baby’s adoptive parents.
		4. The intended parents of the baby (for example, in a surrogacy agreement where you are eligible to obtain a parental order).
4. Neonatal Care Leave
	1. This policy provides all new parents with the right to leave from work if their baby receives neonatal care for at least 7 continuous days within 28 days from their birth. You are entitled to neonatal care leave from your first day of employment.
	2. The length of leave depends upon how long the baby receives neonatal care and there is a maximum entitlement of 12 weeks leave and pay.
	3. Where the birth was multiple babies, such as twins, the maximum entitlement is still 12 weeks and is applicable from the date of the first baby’s birth.
	4. You will be entitled to a period of leave equivalent to the number of weeks your baby spends in a neonatal unit, provided it has been for at least seven consecutive days. Leave will be granted based upon full weeks only (i.e. each period of 7 consecutive days).
	5. The leave will start the day after your baby’s neonatal care starts.
	6. The leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the newborn baby being admitted to the neo-natal unit.
	7. If you are the mother, birthing parent or main adopter, any neonatal leave must be taken immediately at the end of maternity/adoption leave.
	8. Fathers of the baby, non-birthing parents and the secondary adopter will receive the same entitlements but will be able to take the leave at any stage up to 68 weeks from date the child was admitted. This can be added on to paternity leave or taken at any point up to 68 weeks from the baby’s birth.
	9. Neonatal care leave is in additional to Statutory Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave.
	10. In the very unfortunate circumstances that your baby dies, you are still able to take any neonatal care leave that has been accrued. You will also be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave in addition to Neonatal leave. Please see appendix 42 – Parental Bereavement pay and leave for more information.
	11. Neonatal care and leave is defined in two tiers:
		1. Tier 1 is any neonatal leave that commences on the day that the baby starts to receive care (within 28 days of their birth) and ends on the 7th day after the child stops receiving the care. This can be taken in non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time or can be taken as one continuous block.
		2. Tier 2 neonatal care leave is any additional leave taken that falls within the 68-week qualifying period. Tier 2 leave can only be taken in one continuous block.
	12. You must give us the correct notice of your intention to take Neonatal leave:
		1. For Tier 1 leave, give at least 28 days' notice that you intend to take neonatal care leave.
		2. For Tier 2 leave, give at least 15 days' notice that you intend to take neonatal care leave.
		3. To withdraw your notice of intention to take neonatal care leave, you must give us at least 28 days’ notice of your withdrawal from Tier 1 leave, and 15 days’ notice of your withdrawal from Tier 2 leave.
		4. Notice periods may be waived by agreement with your line manager/HR Representative.
	13. You must provide evidence in writing of your entitlement to neonatal care leave, by using the Neonatal Care Pay and Leave form. The information you will need to provide is:
* Your name.
* The baby’s date of birth (for adoption this will be the day the baby is placed with you, or the day of entry into the UK if it is an overseas adoption).
* The date the baby started receiving care – Where the baby has received care more than once, please detail all dates.
* The date the neonatal care ended. Your neonatal care leave will end 7 days after this.
* Confirmation that you intend to care for the baby during your leave.
* Confirmation that you meet the criteria for neonatal care leave.
* Confirmation that you meet the criteria for neonatal care pay.
1. Statutory Neonatal Care Pay
	1. Although you may qualify for Neonatal Care Leave, in order to qualify for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay you must meet all of the following conditions:
		1. Have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) or placement date in the case of adoption.
		2. Have average weekly earnings of not less than the lower earnings figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance contributions in the 8 weeks prior to the birth/ adoption.
		3. Give the correct notice:
* For Tier 1 leave, give at least 28 days' notice that you intend to take neonatal care leave.
* For Tier 2 leave, give at least 15 days' notice that you intend to take neonatal care leave.
	+ 1. Provide evidence in writing, by using the Neonatal Care Pay and Leave form.
	1. Statutory neonatal care pay is set by the government at the same rate as other statutory family leave.
	2. You will receive one week of statutory neonatal care pay for every 7 days that your baby is in receipt of neonatal care without interruption. This is up to a maximum of 12 weeks.
	3. Statutory neonatal care pay starts the day after your baby starts to receive neonatal care and ends 7 days after your baby stops receiving neonatal care.
1. Support
	1. We understand that if your baby is in need of neonatal care, then this will be a very emotional and difficult time for you and your family. Employees of the PCC have access to various support options who can help:
		1. INSERT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT/COUNSELLING INFO
	2. You can also access support and resources through an organisation called Bliss, who support families of babies who are born premature or sick. You can access this information by clicking on this link [For babies born premature or sick | Bliss](https://www.bliss.org.uk/).