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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the rights of employees who are adopting a child from overseas, including time off for appointments and entitlement to adoption leave and pay.

If you are one of a couple jointly adopting a child, only one of you will be entitled to take adoption leave.

The other parent may have the option to take a period of paternity leave, provided that the relevant qualifying conditions are met.

The following definitions are used in this policy:

- **"Official notification"** means written notification, issued by or on behalf of the relevant domestic authority, that it is prepared to issue, or has already issued, a certificate to the overseas authority concerned with the adoption of the child, confirming that the adopter is eligible to adopt and has been assessed and approved as being a suitable adoptive parent.
- The **"relevant domestic authority"** means the Secretary of State, except in the case of an adopter who is habitually resident in Wales, in which case it is the National Assembly for Wales, or Scotland, in which case it is the Scottish Ministers.

The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and the district reserves the right to amend it at any time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants, or any self-employed individuals working for us.

3. Entitlement to ordinary and additional adoption leave

There is no qualifying service requirement to be eligible for statutory adoption leave.

If you are adopting a child from overseas and you have received official notification in respect of that child, you are entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave followed immediately by 26 weeks' additional adoption leave.

You can decide how much adoption leave you wish to take. To exercise your right to take adoption leave, you must comply with the notification procedure set out [below](#).

4. Time off for adoption appointments

Once you have told us that you are adopting a child, you will be entitled to time off work to attend your adoption appointments. The right to time off work is limited to a maximum of six-and-a-half hours for each appointment.

- If you are adopting a child alone, you are entitled to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments.
- If you are adopting a child jointly, one of you can elect to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments.
- The other adoptive parent is entitled to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.
- The parent who takes paid time off is not entitled, later on, to take paternity leave.

The purpose of adoption appointments is to enable contact with the child and for any other reason connected with the adoption, for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the child's care.

We may ask you to provide proof, such as a letter or email from the adoption agency confirming the date and time of the appointment and that the appointment has been arranged by, or at the request of, the adoption agency.

In the case of joint adopters, we may also ask you to sign a declaration confirming your decision to take either paid or unpaid time off.

You should give your line manager as much notice as possible of your adoption or antenatal appointments and, wherever possible, try to arrange them outside your core hours.

5. Notice to take adoption leave

You need to give your line manager written notice within 28-days of receiving the official notification of:

- your intention to take adoption leave;
- the date on which the official notification was received by you; and
- the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain.

We may ask you to provide a copy of the official notification for our inspection.

6. Notice to start your adoption leave

You can choose to start your adoption leave on the day on which the child enters Great Britain or on a fixed date that is no later than 28 days after this date.

You will need to give your line manager at least 28 days' notice in writing of the date on which you intend to start your adoption leave.

We will write to you within 28 days of receipt of your notice confirming the date on which you are expected to return to work if you take your full 52-week entitlement to adoption leave.

7. Notice confirming the child's entry into Great Britain

Within 28 days of the child's entry into Great Britain, you must inform your line manager of the date of entry and provide evidence in the form of a plane ticket or copies of entry clearance documents.

8. Changing your adoption leave start date

If you wish to bring forward your adoption leave start date, you must inform your line manager in writing at least twenty-eight days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

If you wish to postpone your adoption leave start date, you must inform your line manager in writing at least twenty-eight days before the original proposed start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

If you change your adoption leave start date, we will write to you within twenty-eight days of the start of your adoption leave confirming the revised date on which you must return to work if you take your full fifty-two-week entitlement to adoption leave.

9. Adoption pay

Statutory adoption pay

Statutory adoption pay is payable for up to 39 weeks of your adoption leave.

The first six weeks is payable at 90% of your average weekly earnings. The remaining 33 weeks is payable at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. You will qualify for statutory adoption pay if:

- you have been continuously employed for at least twenty-six-weeks at the end of the week in which you received official notification of the adoption;
- you have chosen to receive statutory adoption pay rather than statutory paternity pay;
- you have given the correct notice;
- you have stopped working; and
- your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions.

If you become eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of your adoption leave, your statutory adoption pay will be recalculated to take account of your pay rise, regardless of whether statutory adoption pay has already been paid.

This means that your statutory adoption pay will be recalculated and increased retrospectively, or that you may qualify for statutory adoption pay if you did not previously.

In these circumstances, you will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between statutory adoption pay already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

Statutory adoption pay is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions.

10. Your rights during adoption leave

During ordinary adoption leave and additional adoption leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue.

Your pay will be replaced with statutory adoption pay if you are eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

11. Holiday entitlement

You will continue to accrue your holiday entitlement during your adoption leave. You should make every effort to take any outstanding holiday entitlement before commencing adoption leave or immediately after your adoption leave has ended.

Any holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of adoption leave may only be carried over into the next holiday year with the prior agreement of your line manager.

12. Pension contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on your normal pay during ordinary adoption leave and any period of paid additional adoption leave.

The contributions that you make will be based on the actual pay that you receive during your adoption leave. Our pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid additional adoption leave.

13. Contact during adoption leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your adoption leave.

This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

14. Keeping-in-touch days during adoption leave

You can agree to work or attend training for up to 10 days during your adoption leave without that work bringing your adoption leave or statutory adoption pay to an end. These are known as 'keeping-in-touch' days. Any work carried out on a keeping-in-touch day will count as a whole working day and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your adoption leave.

Any and all work undertaken on keeping-in-touch days is entirely a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.

15. Notice for ending adoption leave

You may take your full period of adoption leave entitlement and return to work at the end of the additional leave period without having to provide notice.

If you wish to return to work earlier than the end of your additional adoption leave period, you must give at least eight-weeks' notice in writing to your line manager confirming the date on which you intend to return.

If you have notified us of an early return date, but subsequently change your mind about returning to work on this date, you must give notice in writing to your line manager at least eight-weeks before the earlier of the date on which you intend to return and the date on which you had previously given notice to return.

16. Returning to work after adoption leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions if returning to work from a period of ordinary adoption leave.

If you have taken a period of additional adoption leave, you have the right to return to the same job wherever possible. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

We will write to you as the end of your adoption leave approaches to remind you of your expected date of return and the arrangements for your first day back.

We recognise that returning to work from adoption leave after a significant period of time away from work can be challenging. We will take steps to ensure that your return to work is as smooth as possible and work will be handed back to you on a gradual basis.

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work, you must give written notice of resignation as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

17. Requests for flexible working

If, following a period of adoption leave, you feel that you would benefit from a change to your working arrangement, you should make a request for flexible working in accordance with our flexible working requests policy. Although we will take all reasonable steps to accommodate a request for flexible working, the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the district.

18. Shared parental leave

If you and your partner meet the eligibility and notice requirements, you may choose to end your adoption leave and pay early and take shared parental leave instead.

This will enable you and your partner to take it in turns to have periods of leave to care for your child, return to work while your partner takes leave, or take leave at the same time as each other.

19. Data protection

When dealing with adoption leave and pay, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy and policy on processing special categories of data.

In particular, we will record only the personal information required and only keep the information for as long as necessary.