

Supporting Working Lives policy

By promoting a truly inclusive workplace and respect for working lives, we provide you with a range of measures and practical support during key life events.

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Policy Owner: **BBC HR-** Employee Relations and Policy

This policy forms part of the contract of employment that applies to employees in the UK, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man on Bands A-Fp, and is an agreed statement between the BBC and recognised joint unions which may only be varied by joint negotiation at the National Joint Council.

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, you have the right to make a complaint in Welsh. We will respond to a complaint or allegation(s) made about you in Welsh.

Who this applies to

All BBC Group employees in the UK.

International colleagues should refer to the relevant international policy.

Five key points of this policy

1. We will provide support for all colleagues during key life events, such as becoming a parent or taking on additional caring responsibilities as a registered carer, bereavement and in dealing with emergencies at home.
2. Some of the support available is enhancements made by the BBC to statutory entitlements and have associated eligibility criteria.
3. Team leaders will undertake respectful, inclusive dialogue with colleagues to ensure timely, fair, and consistent access to available support.
4. Team leaders must make reasonable and regular contact with colleagues during leave to update them on changes and check on their wellbeing.
5. Emergency support is not an entitlement and to be used for unforeseen circumstances only, at a team leader's discretion.

Overarching principles

Everyone's personal circumstances are different and our approach to Supporting Working Lives creates options for colleagues to choose what feels best for them and their families when balancing work and home responsibilities.

The following key principles apply to our approach:

- Clear explanation of each type of support setting out the eligibility criteria of who it applies to, how it is applied, and each aspect of the support provided
- Prorated support for part timers
- BBC provisions meet or exceed statutory requirements
- Leave provisions reflect, where appropriate, the BBC Leave Year (1 April – 31 March)
- Annual Leave (including Public and Bank Holidays and Corporation Day) continues to accrue during Parent, Carer, Bereavement and Emergency Leave
- Team leaders have line management responsibility to maintain reasonable contact with colleagues to support wellbeing and update them of any changes at work. Agreement on frequency and method of maintaining contact should be confirmed before any leave begins and should a change in team leader occur.
- Colleagues on a Career Break are not employees for the period they are on career break and must have returned to work and meet the eligibility criteria to qualify for pay and leave
- Where sensitive information is disclosed, a team leader will maintain confidentiality and agree with the colleague how and when to discuss any implications with others
- Team leaders should refer to other policies and resources to provide additional support to colleagues (including Reasonable Adjustments, Pensions and other Benefits)

Parent support

We want to support you when you're going to become a parent during pregnancy, adoption and once your child has arrived. Our parent support offer will transform the first year of parenthood for many families, giving the opportunity to both parents to spend this precious time at home with their new child/ren. This is our commitment to building a more inclusive and diverse culture across the BBC.

Parent support applies regardless of gender, sexual orientation or how you become a parent (birth, adoption, or surrogacy). The following provisions apply for both parents unless explicitly stated otherwise.

It means that if both parents work at the BBC, where eligible, they will each have their own entitlement to BBC Parent leave and pay, which they can take at the same time or as preferred in the first year.

Fertility treatment

For colleagues embarking on a treatment to become pregnant, we recognise this is a sensitive time for prospective parents and we want to ensure we support you during this period.

To support you during this time, you may have paid time off or your working hours may be adjusted with the agreement of your Team Leader. Any absence related to the fertility treatment will be treated in accordance with the BBC Managing Health and Attendance Policy as time off for medical appointments.

Any workplace or working time adjustments required during treatment should be discussed and agreed with your team leader in advance. This may include safe storage of medication, changes to working hours or location.

Antenatal care and pre-adoption

Both prospective parents are entitled to take reasonable paid time off to attend antenatal appointments. We encourage you to provide your Team Leader with as much notice as possible to plan cover effectively.

Statutory support requires that pregnant employees are allowed paid time-off to attend antenatal care. Employees in a 'qualifying relationship' who are expecting a child have the right to take paid time off work to attend up to two antenatal appointments ('qualifying relationship' is defined by the Children and Families Act 2014).

We recognise that in some cases a parent who is not pregnant, may need to accompany on more than two occasions and we will work with you to facilitate this. Where you can, please try to arrange planned appointments to fit around work commitments, albeit we recognise this may not always be possible. It is entirely reasonable for a team leader to request to see confirmation of the relevant appointment.

Adoptive parents will be allowed a reasonable amount of paid leave to attend any mandatory formalities and court appearances required by adoption proceedings. The minimum entitlement for the primary adopter is paid time-off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other parent has a minimum entitlement to paid leave to attend two appointments. Evidence of the requirement to attend will need to be provided.

Parent leave

BBC Parent Leave is harmonised support and is taken in a single continuous block of time off for up to 52 weeks. Parent leave has replaced maternity, surrogacy, paternity, and adoption leave policies.

Eligibility criteria

- You must be in BBC employment and have completed 26 weeks' service to access BBC Parent leave:
 - **For birth:** by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC);
 - **For UK adoption:** by the week in which the employee receives notification from an Adoption Agency of being 'matched' with a child; or
 - **For overseas adoption:** by the week in which official notification was sent, or from their completion of 26 weeks' continuous service if this is later.

- **For birth:** you are the child/ren's biological parent and have (or expect to have) responsibility for the child/ren's upbringing, or you're the mother's husband, civil partner or partner (but not the child's biological father) and have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from any responsibility of the mother) for the child/ren's upbringing;
- **For adoption:** you must be the biological parent of the child/ren and/or the individual matched with a child by an Adoption Agency and/or the mother's/adopter's spouse, civil partner or partner;
- The leave must be for the purpose of caring for the child/ren or supporting the child/ren; providing each eligible parent with the choice to take up to 52 weeks off work for a new child/ren.

Parent leave is made up of a single continuous period of paid and unpaid leave, subject to eligibility:

- 18 weeks' full pay for both parents*
- Up to 21 weeks' statutory payment (maternity related) where eligible,
- Unpaid time off to make up to 52 weeks in total i.e. normally 13 weeks (birth parent) or 34 weeks for non-birth/adoptive parent

** This includes for the birth parent, the compulsory leave period of two weeks from the date of childbirth that must be taken. It also includes the statutory provision of two weeks' paternity leave. Where a colleague is only eligible for statutory paternity provisions, they can take two weeks off at any time in this period. This provides for the legislative requirement for paternity leave to be taken within 56 days from birth.*

Key steps to follow:

Close all

1) Notification of pregnancy or placement

Colleagues should notify their team leader that they are pregnant as soon as they feel able but no later than the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). This information should be treated in confidence and only disclosed where necessary.

What you need to provide to confirm access to BBC Parent leave and pay and/or statutory entitlements:

- Birth and Surrogacy: You must provide a maternity certificate ([MATB1](#))
- Adoption or Fostering: You must provide a 'Matching Certificate' if adopting in the UK, which is provided by their adoption agency, or an 'Official Notification', if adopting from overseas, which is issued by or on behalf of the relevant UK authority.

If you're adopting in the UK

You must inform the BBC within seven days of being notified by an approved adoption agency of:

- the fact that they have been newly 'matched' with a child for adoption;
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed with them; and
- the date on which they intend their adoption leave to start. This can be either the date of the child's placement or up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

If you're adopting from overseas

You must first inform the BBC within 28 days of receipt of the 'Official Notification' of:

- the date on which the official notification was received; and
- the date on which the child is expected to enter the UK.

You must then give at least 28 days' notice of when you wish their Parent leave to start following adoption. You can choose to start either on the date on which the child enters the UK or on a date that is no later than 28 days after that date.

2) Pregnancy related risk assessment

Following notification, the team leader should with the pregnant colleague undertake a risk assessment. Actions arising from the assessment must be conducted without delay and where necessary working conditions or the role adapted. In cases where a colleague is unable to continue in their role during their pregnancy and no suitable alternative work is available, they will be entitled to receive their basic pay plus any continuing allowances up to the start of their parent leave.

Access to additional support is available for team leaders through the Wellbeing support team. Any concerns about fitness for work at any time during the pregnancy should be referred to occupational health.

3) Sick absence during pregnancy

If you are absent from work due to ill health during their pregnancy, regardless of whether it is pregnancy related or not, the normal procedures for health absence should be followed. Refer to our Managing Health and Attendance Policy.

- If you are pregnant and absent from work for a **non-pregnancy related illness**, your sick absence will automatically end on the day you intended to commence your Parent leave.
- For a **pregnancy related illness** that occurs in the four weeks prior to your due date, this will trigger the start of your Parent leave and pay period on the day following your absence notification.

If you are absent before 36 weeks with a **pregnancy related illness**, this will be treated as sick absence up to four weeks prior to your intended start date. Your parent leave will automatically commence, and sick absence will end at 36 weeks.

4) Planning your time off

Each parent is required to submit when they plan to take their Parent leave (intended start and end date).

Your team leader will discuss your intentions with you following confirmation by submission of a maternity certificate (MAT B1) or appropriate adoption certificate.

For the birth parent the first 26 weeks of Parent Leave covers the statutory 'maternity' provisions of Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and includes a compulsory leave period of two weeks from the date of childbirth. OML is immediately followed by the second 26 weeks which is called Additional Maternity Leave (AML).

You can choose to start your Parent leave any time after the 11th week before the EWC. If your baby is born earlier than the intended start date, your Parent leave will commence on the day following the birth.

You must give at least 28 days' notice of when you plan to take Parent leave, stating:

- the fact you are pregnant;
- the expected week of childbirth (EWC); and
- the date you intend to start your maternity leave.

The BBC will vary the notification requirements only in exceptional circumstances where it is not practicable for the notification to have been given earlier.

As an employee, you are entitled to the benefit of your terms and conditions of employment, except for basic pay and continuing allowances, during Parent leave – this covers both ordinary and additional maternity leave provisions.

If you are pregnant and wish to work beyond the 11th week before the EWC, we may ask you to provide medical evidence to confirm that you are fit to continue working. You must keep your team leader advised of any changes that may impact you during this period and your risk assessment is kept up to date throughout.

Parents who are fostering with a view to adopt under a local government scheme and **surrogate parents** may be entitled to Parent Leave and Pay. Where eligible, this provides for up to 26 weeks of Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) followed by 26 weeks of Additional Adoption Leave (AAL).

You can choose to start Parent Leave when adopting a child, from either the date of the child's placement or up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

If adopting from overseas

You can choose to start Parent Leave either on the date on which the child enters the UK or on a date that is no later than 28 days after this date.

The parent intending to take Paternity Leave should tell their Team Leader by the 15th week before the EWC or within seven days of notification of having been matched with the child unless this is not reasonably practicable.

An employee can change the start date of their Parent Leave if they let their team leader know 28 days in advance of the following:

- the first day of the EWC or the expected placement date; or
- the new date they wish to start their Parent leave, unless this is not reasonably practicable, in which case they should notify the BBC as soon as they can.

5) Update your contact details for while you are off

We want to support you to have quality time off with your child/ren but also want to make sure we can keep in touch while you are away from the workplace. Before you start your Parent leave you must agree the best means to maintain contact while you are off. This will ensure that you are kept informed of any changes or opportunities relating to your role in this period.

While you are off you must advise your team leader of any changes to your personal details in this period.

We encourage you to keep in touch with your team leader so they can actively support you throughout your time away from the workplace.

You will also have the option of keeping in touch through agreed days during your parent or shared parental leave, known as KIT days and SPLIT days in line with the leave type you have chosen.

Pay during Parent Leave

During Parent leave, your Parent pay will depend on whether you are the birth parent/ primary adopter or the other parent. Any statutory payments will be subject to relevant eligibility criteria, and we will make sure that you understand what options you have.

Open all

Birth parents

Other parents

Shared Parental Leave

Colleagues eligible for Shared Parental Leave ('SPL') are entitled to share up to 50 weeks maternity or adoption leave with your partner, to care for your child. This includes surrogacy or prospective adoption arrangements where the colleague is the primary adopter or other parent.

Immediately after childbirth, it is compulsory for the birth parent to take the first two weeks of their entitlement of up to 52 weeks' parent leave. This means that, in respect of childbirth, up to 50 weeks of SPL is available to share with the other parent.

In the case of adoption, SPL cannot be taken during the first two weeks of adoption leave. This therefore means that, in respect of adoption, there is also up to 50 weeks

of SPL to share. In respect of childbirth and adoption, any entitlement to the 50 weeks SPL is reduced by the number of weeks' maternity leave taken by the birth parent, adoption leave taken by the primary adopter and SPL taken by either. SPL must be taken before the baby's first birthday or within one year of the child's placement for adoption.

Eligible colleagues can take SPL as a continuous period or as separate discontinuous blocks each a minimum of one week in duration (enabling you to stop and re-start leave). Notices detailing discontinuous leave will be agreed at the BBC's discretion in consideration of operational requirements. Once notice requirements have been complied with, parents can be on SPL at the same time as each other. Eligible colleagues are entitled to submit up to three notices requesting periods of leave.

To be eligible for leave and pay BBC employees must:

- be the mother, father, or primary adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or primary adopter (known as the birth parent or parent);
- share with another parent the main responsibility for the care of the child;
- have at least 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the expected week of birth or at the week in which the primary adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (known as the 'relevant week');
- themselves be entitled or have a partner who is entitled to statutory maternity or adoption leave, (or to receive statutory maternity or adoption pay or maternity allowance);
- be in continuous employment until the week before any SPL is taken and during the leave period; and
- comply with the relevant notification and declaration requirements summarised below.
- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit (set by the government) over the eight-week period ending with the qualifying or matching week.

In addition, the other parent (working for or externally to the BBC) must:

- have at least 26 weeks' employment (employed or self-employed) out of the 66 weeks prior to the 'relevant week'; and
- have average weekly earnings of at least £30 during at least 13 of the 66 weeks prior to the relevant week.

Notification Requirements

Employees are encouraged to discuss informally with their manager the intention to take SPL to ensure that any plans for discontinuous periods of leave can be considered as soon as possible. The practise also reduces the risk of wasting one of three notices on a discontinuous arrangement that cannot be accommodated.

In addition, the following notification and declaration requirements must be met.

The mother/primary adopter must provide the BBC with a 'Curtailed Notice' (contained within the Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take Shared Parental Leave) at least eight weeks before the date on which their maternity/adoption leave will end. The Curtailed Notice is binding unless:

- it is given before the birth and is revoked within six weeks of the birth (in this case another curtailed notice can be submitted);
- neither parent is entitled to SPL or SShPP; or
- the other parent dies.

If the mother is entitled to maternity allowance only, her notice of curtailment of her allowance must be submitted to the Jobcentre Plus. The allowance cannot be reinstated.

At the same time, employees must give their manager a 'Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take Shared Parental Leave' at least 8 weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL (this will identify at least the first period of SPL but could detail further discontinuous periods of leave). This notice must also include certain declarations by both the mother and other parent sharing the leave e.g. confirmation of eligibility, how you your partner intend to use leave and pay entitlement and curtailment of maternity, adoption leave or maternity allowance, as appropriate.

If binding notification of leave dates is not provided as part of the Notice of Entitlement and Intention to Take SPL document (this is not necessarily a requirement if the notice is submitted more than eight weeks in advance of proposed leave dates) the employees must then finalise their period(s) of SPL by giving their manager a 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notice' **at least eight weeks before** the start date of the first period of SPL. Employees are entitled to submit a further two 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notices', each must be submitted **at least eight weeks before** the start of the period of leave. Employees are entitled to take a continuous period of leave as detailed in each 'Period of Shared Parental Leave Notice'. However, if more than one period of leave (i.e. a discontinuous period) is detailed in the notice, the leave pattern will be subject to management approval, the BBC will attempt to accommodate the pattern but it cannot be guaranteed. An alternative pattern of leave may be suggested or discussed, or the pattern may be refused.

Where a notice detailing a period of discontinuous leave has been submitted and no agreement has been reached after two weeks the employee may:

- take the discontinuous leave as one block from the start date stated on the notice;
- take the continuous block starting from a new start date (as long as the date is later than the start date of the notification and the employee notifies the BBC of the new date within two weeks and five days of the notice being submitted); or
- withdraw the notice, up to the 15th day after it was originally submitted (in which case it will not count towards the maximum three Period of Leave Notices employees can submit). Employees can submit a 'Notice to Vary Period of SPL' where the variation is:

- to the start or end date (as long as the notice is submitted at least 8 weeks before the original start date and the new start date);
- to change or cancel the amount of leave detailed in the notice at least 8 weeks before the original start date; or
- to notify the BBC that a single period of leave becomes discontinuous or vice versa. Where a discontinuous period is detailed agreement must be reached within two weeks see provisions above. Variations will count as one of the three Period of Leave Notices unless:
 - it is made as a result of the baby being born earlier or later than the expected week of childbirth;
 - the BBC has requested the variation; or
 - the BBC has agreed (at its discretion) to accept more than three Period of Leave Notices.

The eight week notice requirement may be modified where the baby is born early, in this case notice to vary the start date should be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth. The BBC reserves the right to request that employees provide copies of: (a) either the birth certificate (or if a birth certificate has not yet been obtain, a signed declaration of the child's date and place of birth) or one or more documents from the adoption agency showing the agency's name and the expected placement date; and (b) the name and address of the employer of the employee's partner (or a declaration that they have no employer). The BBC reserves the right to contact the employer of the employee's partner to confirm and verify entitlements to, and taken, maternity, adoption and shared parental leave and pay

Pay during Shared Parental Leave

BBC Shared Parental Pay is basic pay and any continuing allowances (it does not include any additional payments) for up to 18 weeks, followed by up to 19 weeks Statutory Shared Parental Pay (37 weeks in total, which takes account of the first two weeks of entitlement to 39 weeks statutory pay having been paid as statutory maternity or statutory adoption pay).

Any pay received in respect of BBC Parent leave (Maternity or Adoption Pay) will reduce the enhanced entitlement payable in respect of a colleague's entitlement to 18 weeks BBC Shared Parental Pay, if the maternity or adoption pay related to the same child as the child in respect of whom the parent is receiving BBC Shared Parental Pay.

Any enhanced maternity pay, adoption pay, or shared parental pay received by the colleague's partner from their employer (where that employer is not the BBC) will reduce the colleague's entitlement to 18 weeks BBC Shared Parental Pay by the equivalent number of weeks enhanced pay received by their partner, if the enhanced pay relates to the same child in respect of whom the colleague is claiming BBC Shared Parental Pay.

Nothing within this policy will affect a colleague's rights to receive Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay, Statutory Adoption Pay or Statutory Shared Parental Pay.

To qualify for BBC Shared Parental Pay, the colleague must, comply with the notification requirements set out below, and in the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (the qualifying week) or the week in which they received formal notification of a child match (the matching week):

- Be an employee of the BBC; and
- Have been employed continuously for at least 26 weeks.

It is sufficient for a colleague to have commenced employment at any time during the first week to accumulate the 26 weeks service required. The continuous employment must extend into the qualifying or matching week, but it is not necessary for the employee to be employed for the whole of that week.

BBC Shared Parental Pay is inclusive of Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SShPP) due. For the avoidance of doubt, entitlement to BBC Shared Parental Pay will be limited to 18 weeks between two parents in circumstances where both parents of the child in respect of whom there is an entitlement to BBC Shared Parental Pay are employees of the BBC.

Close all

Premature births

Where a baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks) both parents will receive equivalent extra leave and full pay. This period is calculated as the difference between the original expected due date and the actual date of birth. Should this happen, we will take you through how this will be processed, which is normally at the end of your planned parent leave.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) and Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days

A 'Keeping in Touch' (KIT) or 'Shared Parental Leave in Touch' (SPLIT) day is for any work that would ordinarily be conducted under the contract of employment. These days cannot be taken during the first two weeks after childbirth, or the date of a child being placed.

Each parent can agree up to 10 KIT days without interrupting their Parent Leave. If you are on Shared Parental Leave, you are entitled to up to 20 SPLIT days in total. Where a contract is due to expire during the period of leave, your contract will not be extended to accommodate KIT or SPLIT days.

There is no obligation on you or the BBC to undertake KIT or SPLIT days and any days can be arranged by agreement in advance with your Team Leader. Any agreed days will be no longer than your normal working hours but could be less. They are paid at the employee's hourly/daily rate of basic pay and continuing allowances. If you take a KIT or SPLIT day while still receiving BBC or Statutory Payment, the payment is inclusive of this pay.

Returning to work

At the start of your Parent leave you will have advised of an intended date of return to work. We understand circumstances may change while you are on Parent leave. You must confirm in writing no less than 8 weeks before your intended return to work that you will be returning on that date or propose any changes to your return date for discussion with your team leader. There is no guarantee of a return to work earlier.

You will have your annual leave and public holiday entitlement to arrange and may consider using this entitlement to support your return to work.

For birth parents, the earliest return date is two weeks after the date of childbirth and team leaders should conduct the relevant risk assessment, especially if they are breastfeeding. If there are health complications which mean the birth parent is unable to return to work, the normal health absence procedures outlined in the Managing Health & Attendance policy apply.

As a birth parent or primary adopter, you are entitled to return to your substantive role on the same terms and conditions unless a redundancy situation has arisen following Parent leave. In these cases, you will be entitled to be offered a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions which are no less favourable.

If you decide that you do not wish to return following your parent leave you may wish to explore a career break or submit your written resignation. If you leave following voluntary resignation or because of your role being made redundant during or at the end of your Parent leave, your entitlement to enhanced BBC payments will cease. We won't recover any payments relating to your parent leave that have been made. Where you are eligible to receive further statutory payments these will continue monthly until the entitlement ceases.

Parental Leave

Parental Leave is **unpaid** and subject to meeting the set criteria outlined below.

If you meet the following criteria, you are eligible to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave, in respect of any one child (a week's leave is defined in the same way as for annual leave) before the child's 18th birthday.

You must:

- have been employed continuously for at least one year;
- be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate;
- have or expect to have parental responsibility;
- not be a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts); and
- have a child that is under 18.

This leave is in addition to any eligibility for Parent Leave.

You must have legal responsibility for a child by virtue of birth or adoption, or where not covered by legal responsibility, the partner of a person taking the primary role in caring for the child. We may request evidence of your eligibility.

Parental leave can be taken, subject to operational needs, up to the maximum entitlement of four weeks in any one year for each child. It is recommended that Parental leave is taken as whole weeks (e.g. one week or two weeks) rather than individual days. If you are a parent of a disabled child, you can choose to use individual parental leave days to manage their care.

You must give your Team Leader 21 days' notice of your intention to take Parental Leave. However, subject to operational needs the notice requirement may be reduced to a minimum of seven days to meet emerging responsibilities.

Parental Leave that is due to be taken at the time of the birth or adoption cannot be postponed by the Team Leader provided steps have been taken to notify the anticipated date and all practicable steps have been taken to give seven days' notice of the actual date. In other circumstances Team Leaders may postpone a period of parental leave if they consider that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if the colleague took leave during the period identified. The postponement must not change the leave period requested, must allow commencement of the leave no later than six months after the original period start date, specifying in writing the reasons for the postponement and the new dates. This must be done within seven days of the original notice.

Colleagues who join the BBC from another employer, having an outstanding entitlement to parental leave, may be asked to provide a reference from the previous employer to verify the extent of the outstanding entitlement. Annual leave continues to be accrued throughout Parental Leave.

Colleagues have the right to return from Parental Leave to the role in which they were employed before the leave or a role on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have been applicable had the employee not been absent from work.

Time off for dependants

A dependant is a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, any person who lives in the same household (who is not an employee, tenant, lodger, or boarder) or any person who relies on the employee for assistance in cases of illness or injury or to plan for care in such situations.

Colleagues have the statutory right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours in order to take action which is necessary:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or ending of arrangements for the care of a dependant; and/or

- to deal with an incident involving a dependent child, which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment is responsible for the child.

You must tell your team leader the reason for the absence as soon as is reasonably practicable and how long they expect to be absent. Time Off for Dependants is unpaid leave, however, if an employee takes time off within these provisions, they may be eligible to take some of this paid, under Emergency Leave. This does not limit the right of employees to take further time off under these provisions, but any further leave will be unpaid.

Time off during school holidays for childcare should be met using annual, parental leave or approved flexible working arrangement e.g., term time working.

Carer support

We support working carers to maintain a healthy work/life balance beyond using their annual leave to support their own wellbeing and provide respite from their caring responsibilities. We provide enhanced time off as paid Carer Leave for colleagues who are responsible for regularly supporting another person, who would otherwise be unable to cope without their help. This is unpaid and is different from someone who provides care professionally, occasionally or through a voluntary organisation. This support is accessible for colleagues with children with disabilities or adult dependants, usually a relative or close friend. These responsibilities may change over time and be applicable on a temporary or permanent basis, as set out in the Care Act 2014.

Although for many carers, caring can have positive and rewarding aspects, there are lots of reasons why caring can also leave carers needing extra support. This may include needing practical help with their caring role, replacement care so they can take a break, help with their finances, emotional and wellbeing support, and access to information and advice. Some may need practical and emotional support if their caring role changes or ends.

Carer leave

Carer leave is not time off for routine care provision as this is provided through our offer of flexible working and reasonable adjustment of working hours during short term adjustment to care for dependants. We also expect that all employees plan regular breaks using annual leave.

In recognition of the important roles working carers undertake, Carer leave is an entitlement to access up to 70 hours paid leave in specific circumstances.

Eligibility

There is no length of service requirement to access Carer leave. It's only available for colleagues who undertake and have caring responsibilities for a friend or family

member, who due to illness or disability cannot cope without their support and includes short term foster care arrangements.

In addition, fully paid Carer leave supports colleagues who are permanent or temporary carers where they are required to support their dependant such as at planned hospital appointments or dedicated specific time to meet with care teams or specialist support for dependants. A flexible and reasonable approach will be taken to support you and your team leader may ask you for supporting evidence.

It is also in place to help during those times where carers have had to respond to short notice emergencies that would impact on their ability to undertake their work. In many cases adjustment of working hours can be agreed to meet ad hoc carer responsibilities following the initial emergency. You should discuss and agree arrangements with your team leader.

Carer leave is prorated. Carer leave is entitlement to paid time off for specified reasons and should be evidenced. Carer leave is an entitlement to access up to 70 hours paid leave which can be taken in one-hour blocks. Carer leave is provided annually in line with the leave year as:

- Up to 35 hours' paid leave for time off for a **planned event**, such as accompanying their dependant, as their registered carer, to hospital appointments, routine healthcare appointments, specialist treatments or meetings with key professionals relating to their care.

Wherever possible, colleagues should endeavour to arrange appointments outside their working hours. However, we recognise that sometimes specialist appointments cannot be rearranged. To facilitate your attendance at medical appointments and treatments for those you care for, please discuss this with your team leader as soon as you know.

- Up to 35 hours' paid leave for **care emergencies** such as unexpected emergency or overnight admission to hospital relating to the care of your dependant person. In these difficult circumstances, particularly when occurring outside normal working hours, we ask that you notify your team leader as soon as possible to agree next steps and when you are expected to next attend work.

Any further emergency leave would be discretionary and falls within Emergency leave provision. Carer leave is not accumulated and cannot be carried forward into a subsequent leave year.

Additional support for carers

Additional support is available for registered carers to help in managing for routine care provision through making reasonable adjustments to working hours on a temporary basis or through an agreed flexible working arrangement.

If a colleague needs further support, they can consider Unpaid Leave or a Career Break.

Bereavement support

We recognise that dealing with a bereavement is personal and as such we will provide you with the appropriate support once you've discussed this with your Team Leader.

Whether expected or unexpected, a loss can impact you in a number of ways and bereavement leave is available for you to take to best support you at this challenging time.

Bereavement leave is a 'day-one' right for all colleagues and is **two weeks' (70 hours)** full pay and leave, aligned to the BBC leave year. The leave covers the loss of a pregnancy, a child, a legal dependant, immediate family, next of kin or a member of your household.

Following your loss, you can discuss how you wish to use the support available to you with your Team Leader. This may be following the death or the weeks after to plan or to attend a funeral or memorial service.

In the specific case of the loss of a child or stillbirth, we provide an enhancement to the statutory provision for Parental bereavement leave and pay. Team leaders will agree support for the biological parent; stepparent; adopter; intended parent; parent in fact or parent's partner. You can choose to take two consecutive weeks or as separate single week blocks within the year after the loss.

Pregnancy loss

In cases of pregnancy loss (including early pregnancy loss, miscarriages, and stillbirths), Bereavement leave incorporates the statutory entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave and provides enhanced support for early pregnancy loss where this is disclosed to a Team Leader.

For additional wellbeing support, more information can be found on [Gateway](#).

Emergency leave

There is a variety of support available, dependent upon your personal circumstances.

During global or national emergencies, our service as a public service broadcaster is of particular importance and Team Leaders need to be able to fulfil operational requirements and support employees.

In unforeseen circumstances only, Emergency Leave can be provided where a clear discussion has taken place about the support an employee requires. To support emergencies, Team Leaders can grant up to 70 hours (equivalent to 10 days) fully paid leave. More information on alternative arrangements such as hybrid working, informal flexible working requests can be found in the Flexible Working policy.

Related policies

- [Managing Health and Attendance policy](#)

For information about time off for medical appointments and pregnancy related sickness

- [Managing Menopause at Work policy](#)
- [Flexible Working policy](#)
- [Career Break policy](#)