

BECCLES TOWN COUNCIL

Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave Policy and Scheme

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy and scheme set out the rights of employees to Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave and pay.
- 1.2. Beccles Town Council (BTC) is committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with your children is important.
- 1.3. Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave is available to enable members of staff, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or whether they are transitioning, whose partners are having a baby or are adopting a child to take time off to support their partner. Paternity (Maternity Support Leave) is also available where a couple are jointly adopting and the other member of the couple is taking Adoption/Surrogacy leave.
- 1.4. The following definitions are used in this policy:
 - *'Childbirth' means the live birth of a child, or a still birth after a pregnancy lasting at least 24 weeks.*
 - *'Expected week of childbirth' (EWC) means the week, starting on a Sunday, when the mother's doctor or midwife expects her to give birth.*
 - *'Qualifying week' means the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.*
- 1.5. This policy has been updated in line with the Paternity Leave Amendment Regulations 2024.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy and scheme shall apply to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

3. Who can take Paternity (Maternity Support) leave

- 3.1 To qualify you must be taking the time off to support the mother or care for the baby/adopted child. You can take Paternity (Maternity Support) leave if you:
 - have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.
 - are the biological father of a child, or the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother; and
 - have, or expect to have, the main responsibility (apart from any responsibility of the mother) for the child's upbringing.
- 3.2 This means that Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave is available to an eligible female

employee who is married to, or is the civil partner or partner of, the child's mother.

- 3.3 Paternity (Maternity Support) leave is also available to the spouse, civil partner or partner of an individual who has adopted a child. Where a couple adopt a child jointly, one may take adoption leave and the other Paternity (Maternity Support) leave. They are entitled to choose for themselves which adoptive parent takes which type of leave.
- 3.4 To be eligible for Paternity (Maternity Support) leave you must have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which:
- The adoption agency formally notifies the adopter that they have been matched with the child (UK adoptions); Or,
 - The date the child enters the UK or when you want your pay to start (overseas adoptions).

4. Length and Timing of Paternity Leave

- 4.1 The Paternity Leave Amendment Regulations 2024 will apply in all cases where the expected week of childbirth falls on or after 6 April 2024. This allows paternity leave to be split into two blocks of one week at any point in the first year after the birth or adoption of their child. For parents of babies born before 6 April, fathers or partners are only able to take one continuous block of paternity leave of one or two weeks within the first eight weeks after birth. You can start your paternity leave on any day from the child's birth, but it must end within 52 weeks of the birth (or the expected week of childbirth if the child is born early).
- 4.2 In the case of an adopted child, the 52-week period runs from the date on which the child was placed for adoption with the adopter (or the child's entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas).
- 4.3 A week is based on your usual working pattern; if you work Mondays and Tuesdays only, a week would be two days or if you work Monday to Friday, a week would be five days.
- 4.4 You can take just one period of Paternity (Maternity Support) leave per pregnancy or adoption, regardless of the number of children born as a result of the pregnancy or the number of children placed under the same adoption arrangement.

5. Paternity Leave Pay

- 5.1 You will be eligible to receive Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay for two weeks at full contractual pay (if you fulfill the criteria in 3 above). If you do not fulfill the criteria for the

first week to be paid at full, contractual pay then the two weeks will be paid at the SPP rate or 90% of your weekly earnings, whichever is less.

- 5.2 Note: where the employee holds two jobs and only takes leave from one of the jobs – SPP may still be payable. Please seek advice from your line manager.

6. Notice to take Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave

- 6.1 If you wish to take Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave, please make your request in writing to your line manager.
- 6.2 To take Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave for a birth child, you need to give your line manager at least 15 weeks' written notice of:
- the date on which your partner's baby is due;
 - the length of paternity leave you wish to take; and
 - the date on which you wish your paternity leave to start.
- 6.3 To take Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave for an adopted child, you need to give your line manager written notice of your intention to take the leave no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. The notice must specify:
- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child;
 - the date on which the child is expected to be placed for adoption;
 - the length of paternity leave you wish to take; and
 - the date on which you wish your paternity leave to start.

7. Changing your paternity leave plans

- 7.1 If you wish to change the timing of your Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave, you should normally give your line manager at least 28 days' notice of the revised start date.

8. Rights during Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave

- 8.1 During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Salary will be replaced by statutory paternity pay if you are eligible for it. All other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid.

9. Returning to work after paternity leave

- 9.1 Following your leave, you have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable to you than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent.
- 9.2 Your continuity of employment is not affected.

10. Time off for antenatal care

- 10.1 In addition to your Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave, you have the right to take time off to accompany a pregnant woman with whom you are having a child at up to two antenatal appointments. This time off will be unpaid.
- 10.2 This could be if you are the husband or civil partner of the pregnant woman, the biological father of the expected child, or you could be living with the pregnant woman in a supportive family relationship.

To make a request for time off to accompany someone at an antenatal appointment, you should contact your line manager. To declare that you are eligible, you will be asked to complete a [Declaration form for requesting time off to accompany pregnant woman at antenatal appointment.docx](#).

- 10.3 The antenatal appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife, or nurse. We expect that normally no more than half a day is needed for an antenatal appointment, but the leave includes the time needed to travel to the appointment and any waiting time needed at the appointment and can be for a maximum of six-and-a-half hours on each occasion.
- 10.4 You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the antenatal appointment and, wherever possible, arrange them as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

11. Time off to attend adoption appointments

- 11.1 If you are adopting a child, you are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments, which enable contact with the child (for example, to bond with them before the placement) or for any other purpose connected with the adoption (for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the care of the child).
- 11.2 Where you are part of a couple jointly adopting a child, the couple can elect for one of them to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other can

elect to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

To make a request for time off for an adoption appointment, you should contact your line manager.

- 11.3 The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with the employee.
- 11.4 You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the adoption appointment and, wherever possible, arrange them as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

12. In the event of something going wrong

- 12.1 If you have any concerns relating to Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave, please do not hesitate to contact your line manager who will ensure that sensitive consideration is given to any issues raised.
- 12.2 In the extremely painful circumstance that your child dies after 24 weeks of pregnancy, the adoption placement is terminated, or the child's mother/adopter dies, you will still be entitled to Paternity (Maternity Support) Leave. However, please contact your line manager, as soon as possible so that any necessary arrangements can be made. You may additionally be entitled to two working weeks' paid parental bereavement leave which can be taken as one or two week blocks during the 56 weeks following your bereavement.