

Policy

Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

Introduction

Employees have a statutory right to neonatal care leave from day one of employment where they are responsible for a child receiving neonatal care, subject to eligibility requirements.

We recognise that this can be a difficult and worrying time, both physically and mentally. This policy explains your rights to time off, pay during time off and other support offered. Employees will not be subject to detriment for taking neonatal care leave.

Entitlement

You may take neonatal care leave if you have parental or other prescribed responsibility for a child who is receiving, or who has received, neonatal care. This will apply if you are:

- a) the child's parent, intended parent, or partner of the child's mother at the date of birth
- b) in cases of adoption, the child's adopter, prospective adopter, or the partner of either, at the date the child is placed.

You are entitled to take neonatal care leave where you are responsible for a child receiving neonatal care that lasts for at least 7 consecutive days and starts within 28 days beginning with the day after the child's birth.

You are entitled to take one week of neonatal care leave for each consecutive 7 day period that your child is receiving neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks

'Neonatal care' is defined in law as medical care that may be received in hospital, or out of hospital providing the child was originally an inpatient and the care is under the direction of a consultant. Neonatal care also covers children receiving palliative or end of life care.

Notice Requirements

You can take neonatal care leave during two periods:

- a) "tier 1 period" – starts from the day the child starts receiving neonatal care, ending with the 7th day after the child stops receiving neonatal care. Leave taken in this period can be taken in non-consecutive weeks.
- b) "tier 2 period" – any period which is outside of "tier 1" during which you are entitled to neonatal care leave. Leave taken in this period must be taken consecutively.

You must provide the following information when you notify us of your intention to take neonatal care leave:

- a) your name
- b) the child's date of birth; and date of placement if adoption
- c) date(s) the child started receiving neonatal care
- d) date neonatal care ended if the child is no longer receiving it
- e) date you want the leave to begin
- f) number of weeks' leave you want to take
- g) declaration that you are taking the leave to care for the child

h) declaration that you meet the eligibility requirements.

If you wish to take neonatal care leave in the tier 1 period you must simply notify us verbally by contacting your Line Manager before you are due to start work on your first day of leave, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so, in which case you must notify us as soon as it is reasonably practicable. In practice, this means that no advance notice is needed but you must let us know before you start work on that day, where reasonably practicable.

Where you have given notice in the tier 1 period of your intention to take neonatal care leave before the child has stopped receiving neonatal care, you must tell us the date that the neonatal care ends, as soon as is reasonably practicable after that date.

Where the child starts to receive neonatal care again after you have told us that neonatal care has ended, you must tell us the date that the neonatal care started again and the date when it ends, as soon as reasonably practicable after each date.

If you wish to take neonatal care leave in the tier 2 period you must give us the required notice in writing no later than 15 days before the first day of leave when taking a single week, or no later than 28 days before the first day of leave when taking two or more weeks.

If you change your mind about taking neonatal care leave, you can withdraw your notice by following the same notice periods that you are required to give to take leave.

Notwithstanding the above, we may agree to waive the notice requirements where appropriate depending on the circumstances.

Your neonatal care leave will start on the day specified when you give notice unless the leave is due to start on the same day as the notice is given, or you are at work on that day, then it will start the day after.

Taking Leave

You cannot take neonatal care leave before the day after the first 7-day uninterrupted period of neonatal care. Neonatal care leave can only be taken in minimum blocks of one week.

You must take the leave before the end of a period of 68 weeks beginning with the child's date of birth or date of placement in cases of adoption.

If you accrue neonatal care leave after already starting another period of statutory family leave, such as maternity or paternity leave, then you can take the neonatal care leave after the end of the statutory family leave, providing it is within 68 weeks beginning on the child's date of birth or placement.

Pay During Leave

You are entitled to statutory neonatal care pay during neonatal care leave if you:

- a) are eligible for statutory neonatal care leave
- b) have 26 weeks' continuous service by the relevant week
- c) earn at least the lower earnings limit on average calculated over the period of eight weeks ending with the relevant week
- d) are still in employment in the week before neonatal care starts.

Where you are entitled to another form of statutory family leave payment, such as statutory maternity pay, the relevant week is the same as the qualifying week for that payment. In all other cases, the relevant week is the week immediately before neonatal care starts.

If you are eligible, you are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks' statutory neonatal care pay, paid at one week per every 7 uninterrupted days of care the child receives.

The weekly rate of statutory neonatal care pay is the lower of:

- a) the current statutory rate
- b) 90% of your normal weekly earnings.

If you are eligible for statutory neonatal care pay, you need to give us notice in writing of your intention to claim it alongside your notice of intention to take neonatal care leave.

Where you are claiming statutory neonatal care pay in the tier 1 period, you must provide notice before the end of 28 days after the first day of the pay week the notice refers to.

If you are claiming statutory neonatal care pay in the tier 2 period, you must provide notice no later than 15 days before the first day of the relevant pay week when taking a single week, or no later than 28 days before the first day of the first relevant pay week when taking two or more weeks.

The notice must include:

- a) your name
- b) the child's date of birth; and date of placement if adoption
- c) date(s) the child started receiving neonatal care
- d) date neonatal care ended if the child is no longer receiving it
- e) declaration that the week you are claiming pay for was taken to care for the child
- f) declaration that you meet the eligibility requirements.

[Returning to Work](#)

You have the right to return to work to the same job unless you return after a specific point at which you will have the right to return to a similar job on no less favourable terms if it is not practicable for you to return to the same job. Your manager will explain how this affects you based on your individual circumstances.

[Employee Assistance Programme](#)

We would like to remind you that you have access to a 24-hour telephone counselling service and we would like to encourage you to use it if you feel you would like to talk to someone about your situation. The service can be accessed via the Health Assured Portal.

As part of our Employee Assistance Programme, you also have access to an online wellbeing tool, Wisdom AI, which you can use to find fast answers to any wellbeing questions you have. You can access Wisdom AI at any time via the Health Assured portal. The link in the menu bar will take you directly to the Wisdom AI homepage, where you can ask your question. More details of this service are available from your Line Manger.

[Other Related Policies](#)

For more information on time off in relation to children, please read our policies on maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, parental leave, shared parental leave and parental bereavement leave.

Use of Neonatal Care Leave

Employees who take time off under this policy for reasons other than those for which the statutory right to neonatal care leave is intended may be subject to investigation and subsequent disciplinary proceedings.