

**This document forms part of the Collective Agreement with effective date of changes being  
1 December 2025**

# **Shared Parental Leave**

**Date: December 2025**

Author: Pay and Reward

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Review Date:

### 1. Purpose Statement

- 1.1. This policy details BCP Council's provision for Shared Parental Leave and Shared Parental Pay.

Legislation introduced in December 2014 relating to parents of children due or placed after 5 April 2015 allowed for Shared Parental Leave. BCP Council wish to enhance parents' rights by offering an occupational pay scheme for eligible colleagues.

- 1.2. Eligible parents can share parental leave and pay in the first year after:
- the birth of their child
  - adopting a child
  - getting a parental order if they had the child through surrogacy.

### 2. Who the policy applies to

- 2.1 This policy applies to all eligible colleagues of BCP Council and aims to inform them of their entitlements to statutory and occupational leave and pay. The Council is committed to providing a consistent and fair approach in line with legislative requirements and best practice.
- 2.2 Both parents can work for BCP Council or one parent for another organisation.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to centrally employed teachers or teaching staff within schools where separate national and local agreements apply.
- 2.4 This policy does not apply to agency workers or contractors.

### 3. This policy replaces

- 3.1 This policy replaces any national or local agreements that have been reached prior to the implementation date of this policy. Any contractual arrangements will be superseded by the 2025 collective agreement on pay and reward.
- 3.2 This policy replaces previous Bournemouth Council, Christchurch and East Dorset District Council and Borough of Poole, Dorset County Council or any other Shared Parental Leave policies.

### 4. The approval process

- 4.1 The terms of this policy have been agreed in conjunction the trade unions and approval by Corporate Management Board.

## **5. Links to Council Strategies**

- 5.1 This policy supports BCP Council's People and Culture Strategy.
- 5.2 During the preparation of this policy document due consideration has been given to the following Key Council Strategies:
- Corporate Strategy
  - Workforce Strategy
  - Health & Wellbeing Strategy
  - Children in Care Strategy
  - Equality & Diversity Strategy

## **6. The Policy**

- 6.1 BCP Council is committed to helping its colleagues balance their personal and work commitments. We understand that you may wish to share the care of a child. This policy outlines colleagues' entitlement to Shared Parental Leave and Shared Parental Leave Pay.

- 6.2 Entitlements for time off and statutory and occupational pay can be found in this policy.

Shared Parental Pay will be paid to BCP Council colleagues only. The partner will be paid by their employer if their employer offers this.

- 6.3 Amount of leave that can be shared:

Under the Maternity Policy, mothers and primary adopters are entitled to take up to 52 weeks of leave, with up to 39 weeks of pay.

The Shared Parental Leave Policy provides parents with an opportunity share 50 of the 52 weeks in leave. Colleagues can begin a period of Shared Parental leave, at any time following the date of birth, if the compulsory two weeks maternity or adoption leave has been taken. Shared Parental Leave requires the mother or primary adopter to reduce their maternity or adoption leave and pay.

Shared Parental Leave can only start following the birth, adoption or placement of the child, and must be taken by the child's first birthday.

Of the 50 weeks, shared parental leave must:

- be taken in blocks of at least one week and any leave not taken by the first birthday or first anniversary of placement for adoption is lost.
- A maximum of three requests for continuous leave per pregnancy can be made by each colleague.

Note: If you are having multiple babies or have more than one child placed with you as part of the same arrangement, you will be entitled to only one application for Shared Parental leave and pay (with up to 3 continuous periods of leave).

#### 6.4 Amount of Pay that can be shared:

Under the Maternity Policy, mothers and primary adopters are entitled to up to 39 weeks of paid leave.

The Shared Parental Leave Policy provides parents with an opportunity to share 37 of the 39 weeks of paid leave.

The amount of Shared Parental Pay available will be dependent upon how leave is shared between parents, and the amount of pay and leave already taken by the mother or primary adopter as part of their maternity or adoption leave.

Any statutory shared parental pay due during Shared Parental Leave will be paid at the rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the colleague's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate. Details on the current rate set by the Government can be found: [Shared Parental Leave and Pay: What you'll get - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shared-parental-leave-and-pay-what-youll-get)

In addition, under this policy, colleagues with least 1 year's continuous local government service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth or placement could be entitled to up to 16 weeks of Occupational Shared Parental Pay.

Provided the mother or primary adopter has agreed to engage in share parental leave and pay, the 16 weeks of Occupational Shared Parental Leave Pay (minus the amount of maternity / adoption pay and leave already taken by the mother /primary adopter) will be calculated on a maximum of:

- 4 weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings
- 12 weeks at 50% of average weekly earnings
- any remaining available weeks will be paid at the statutory rate set by Government or be unpaid.

Occupational Shared Parental Leave Pay requires the employee to return to work for at least three months following their last period of Shared Parental Leave. If the colleague leaves within this three-month period, the enhanced Occupational Shared Parental leave pay must be repaid.

#### 6.5 Eligibility

The mother/primary adopter of the child must be eligible for Maternity/ Adoption Pay or Maternity Allowance.

New or expectant mothers / Primary Adopters must agree to reduce their Maternity or Adoption Leave to claim Shared Parental Leave. Shared Parental Leave can be taken alongside Maternity Leave, provided the mother or primary adopter has given "binding notice" to end her Maternity leave.

For birth parents you must:

- both share responsibility for the child at the time of the birth. You are not eligible if you started sharing responsibility for the child after they were born
- have been employed continuously by BCP Council for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the due date.

For adopters or parents using a surrogate:

- you must both share responsibility for the child from the child's due date or birth date (if using a surrogate), or the date the child is placed with you (if adopting or fostering to adopt)
- have been employed continuously by BCP Council for at least 26 weeks by the end of the week you are matched with a child you're adopting, or the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the due date (if using a surrogate).

To be eligible for Shared Parental Leave and Pay, government minimum earnings must be met. More details can be found: [Eligibility for birth parents](#) [Eligibility for adopters or parents using a surrogate](#)

#### 6.6 Notification required:

The colleague must provide a minimum of 8 weeks' notice. The **three** notices that the parents must give to the relevant employer to be able to take shared parental leave are made up of three elements.

- These are: **Maternity or Adoption leave curtailment notice** – A Mother or Primary adopter may choose to end their maternity or Adoption leave early (this can be withdrawn in limited circumstances and the mother must not have returned to work and want to go back on leave.)
- **Entitlement and intention notice** - non-binding indication of start date of leave period – must provide 8 weeks' notice. To be signed by both parents.
- **Period of leave notice** - Binding confirmation of the start and end dates of the leave period. This can be given at the same time as the Notice of entitlement and intention. A maximum of 3 requests per colleague per pregnancy.

Variation or cancellation of period of leave notice

- The colleague can vary or cancel their proposed shared parental leave dates if they complete a 'period of leave notice', the colleague must provide 8 weeks' notice before any period of leave to be varied or cancelled.
- This will mean the colleague has used one of their 3 requests.

Note: The pro-forma of the above forms and other helpful information can be found by clicking on the link: <https://bcpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/HR/SitePages/Shared-Parental-Leave>

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform both employers how they intend the leave and pay to be shared.

## 7. How to use this policy

In conjunction with the Maternity & Adoption Support Leave Policy, Paternity Leave Policy, Parental Leave Policy, Right to Request Flexible Working Policy, Annual Leave and Time off Policy.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

### 8.1 **Manager** (as applicable)

- To inform their colleagues of the notifications and information that they will need to produce
- To appropriately manage the colleague's return to work after each period of Shared Parental leave
- To ensure the continuation of adequate service provision in a colleague's absence
- To pass on to People and Culture the actual date of birth of the child and any notification that they may receive that the colleague is no longer eligible for shared parental leave
- To discuss with the colleague before they go on shared parental leave, any voluntary arrangements for staying in contact over the course of the period of their leave so issues such as Shared Parental Leave In-Touch (SPLIT) days and return to work can be discussed.

### 8.2 **Colleague** (as applicable)

- To notify their Line Manager and Human Resources of their wish to start Shared parental leave 8 weeks prior to first period of leave.
- To provide relevant documentation – notices and declarations from both colleague and partner
- To give 8 weeks' notice of any changes
- To inform manager as soon as possible of actual date of birth or placement of child.
- To inform manager as soon as they are no longer eligible

### 8.3 **Human Resources** (as applicable)

- To check eligibility for shared parental leave and pay
- To check the notices and declarations have been completed correctly by colleague and their partner
- To write to the colleague confirming their shared parental leave dates and pay entitlements
- To ensure correct payment of entitlements

### 8.4 **Trade Unions** – Available for members of recognised trade unions

- To support the colleague

## 9. Enforcement and sanctions

9.1 Non-compliance/abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action.