



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Neonatal Care Leave Policy & Procedure

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POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose and Core Principles

We understand that having a newborn in neonatal care is one of the most challenging experiences a parent can face, and that the time when your baby is in hospital brings differing support needs. This policy explains what time off you are entitled to, how you will be paid during that time, and what additional support is available. The accompanying procedure describes eligibility criteria and the steps you need to follow to request time off.

Scope

The policy and procedure applies to all eligible employees whose baby is born on or after 6 April 2025, in both birth and adoption situations.

Responsibility

Human Resources has responsibility for ensuring that this policy and procedure is adhered to and will provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on its application. Managers should regularly check in with employees during this difficult time.

Review

This policy and procedure will be monitored on an annual basis and reviewed a minimum of every three years or sooner, in light of legislative changes and organisational requirements as appropriate.

PROCEDURE

1. Eligibility and Entitlement for Neonatal Care Leave

- 1.1 Neonatal care leave (NCL) is specifically for parents of babies who are admitted into neonatal care within 28 days of birth. Eligible employees will be able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave in addition to their other family leave entitlements such as maternity and paternity/partner leave.
- 1.2 “Neonatal care” is defined in law as care of a medical or palliative kind lasting for at least 7 consecutive days which starts within 28 days beginning with the day after the child’s birth. The medical care 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 babies receiving palliative or end of life care.
- 1.3 To qualify for neonatal care leave, the following conditions must be met:
 - At the birth of the baby, you must be the baby’s parents, intended parents (in relation to surrogacy/adoption) or partner to the baby’s mother and you must have or expect to have responsibility for the baby’s upbringing.
 - The newborn must be admitted to neonatal care (see 1.2 above) and must remain in neonatal care for at least 7 continuous days. The first period of 7 days begins with the day after the day the baby first receives neonatal care.
 - Neonatal care leave must be taken to provide care for the baby.
- 1.4 Parents may take one week’s NCL for each uninterrupted 7 day period that their baby receives neonatal care. The maximum amount of leave is 12 weeks.
 - 1.4.1 **Example:** A baby receives neonatal care continuously for 24 days following birth and then goes home. Each parent can take three weeks of neonatal care leave as there have been three uninterrupted 7 day periods of neonatal care.
- 1.5 A maximum of 12 weeks NCL will be available. Neonatal care leave is not increased for multiple births but can be accrued in respect of more than 1 baby if they receive neonatal care at different times – in these circumstances please seek more information from HR Services about how neonatal care leave accrues.
- 1.6 Leave must be taken within the first 68 weeks of your baby’s birth (or placement in the case of adoption) and cannot be taken before the day after the first 7 day uninterrupted period of neonatal care. If other family leave has already started, neonatal care leave should be taken after this leave. It is not possible to switch from maternity leave to neonatal care leave and then restart maternity leave. As many people will already be on some form of family leave while their baby is in neonatal care, neonatal leave will often be taken after neonatal care has ended and at the end of maternity, shared parental or adoption leave. For partners whose paternity/partner leave entitlement has run out while their baby is still receiving care (or partners who choose to take neonatal care leave in advance of planned paternity leave), neonatal care leave may start while your baby is still receiving care.

- 1.7 There are two categories of neonatal care leave depending on when the leave is taken, and these are called Tier 1 or Tier 2 periods.
- 1.8 Tier 1 period leave applies to leave taken while a baby is still receiving neonatal care and up to one week after the care has ended. Tier 1 leave can be taken in non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time. The Tier 1 period leave ends on the 7th day after the day the baby stops receiving neonatal care.
- 1.9 Tier 2 period leave applies to all other neonatal care leave and must be taken in one continuous block.

2. Eligibility and Entitlement for Neonatal Care Pay

- 2.1 You are entitled to Statutory and Occupational Neonatal Care Pay during neonatal care leave if you:
 - are eligible for statutory neonatal care leave
 - have 26 weeks' continuous service by the 'relevant week'¹
 - earn at least the lower earnings limit on average calculated over the period of eight weeks ending with the week before neonatal care starts (criteria for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP) only)
 - are still in employment in the week before neonatal care starts.
- 2.2 The breakdown of Statutory and Occupational Neonatal Care Pay that eligible employees will receive is outlined below. This is the maximum entitlement – the amount of leave and pay available is directly linked to how long your baby receives neonatal care (one week per every 7 uninterrupted days of neonatal care the child receives):

Weeks 1 – 6 Full pay (inclusive of SNCP)
Weeks 7 – 12 Statutory weekly rate or a rate equivalent to 90% average weekly earnings, whichever rate is the lower.
- 2.5 Where both parents are employed by our University and are eligible for occupational neonatal care pay, both parents are entitled to the pay and leave (it does not need to be shared).
- 2.6 If you are eligible for Occupational Neonatal Care Pay and your contract ends during your neonatal care leave, Occupational Neonatal Care Pay will be paid until the end of your contract and thereafter SNCP (if applicable) will continue to be paid through our University.
- 2.7 Variable Hours Contracts
For employees on variable hours contracts, for example part-time lecturers, average weekly earnings for Occupational Neonatal Care Pay will be based on the pay received in the current role in the 12 full months immediately prior to the week in which neonatal care starts. If you have less than 12 months service in the role, the calculation will be made from your start date in the role.

¹ Where an employee is entitled to another form of statutory family leave payment, the relevant week will be the same as the qualifying week for that payment. In all other cases, the relevant week will be the week immediately before care starts.

- 2.8 Payments made to you whilst on neonatal care leave will be made in the same way as other earnings and will also be subject to tax, national insurance and pension contributions, where applicable. Where you are a member of salary sacrifice schemes, advice should be sought from Payroll regarding the terms and conditions of such schemes during neonatal care leave. During neonatal care leave, employee pension contributions will be based on actual pay received.

3. Notification for Neonatal Care Leave

- 3.1 We recognise that parents of a baby in neonatal care will be under significant emotional strain, and that giving notice for leave might be hard. If your baby is still receiving care (Tier 1 leave - see paragraph 1.7), please give notice as soon as you can.
- 3.1.1 Where your baby is no longer receiving neonatal care, notice for leave should be given in advance. At least 15 days ahead for a single week of neonatal care leave, or 28 days ahead if it is for two or more weeks.
- 3.2 To take neonatal care leave, complete the 'Neonatal Care Leave Application form' (Appendix 1), including the baby's date of birth (or date of placement for adoption), when neonatal care began and ended, and the dates you want to take off.
- 3.3 Evidence of the dates of neonatal care may be required (e.g. Hospital Consultant note). If notice is given before your baby has stopped receiving neonatal care, then you must notify your manager and HR Services of the date that neonatal care ends, as soon as you can after that date.

4 Employment Terms and Conditions during Neonatal Care Leave

- 4.1 Any period of neonatal care leave counts as continuous service and your continuous service rights are not affected.
- 4.2 You are entitled to receive any increments and/or cost of living increases, which you would have been due, had you not been on neonatal care leave.
- 4.3 You will accrue annual leave, including bank holidays whilst on neonatal care leave.
- 4.4 You are entitled to return to the same job on the same employment terms and conditions as if you had not been on neonatal care leave. Employees who are on neonatal care leave will be consulted at an early stage where their post is subject to our University's Management of Change process and/or at potential risk of redundancy. For further information about redundancy protection during neonatal care leave and the 18 month period following the birth/placement for adoption², please refer to our 'Management of Change Guidelines'.

² Redundancy protection during the 18 month period following the birth/placement for adoption only applies to employees who take more than 6 consecutive weeks of neonatal care leave

5 Further Support for Colleagues and Managers

- 5.1 We would like to remind you that you have access to a 24 hour telephone counselling service and we encourage you to use it if you feel you would like to talk to someone about your situation. The service can be accessed via our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) webpage. [Colleague Wellbeing](#) and [Wellbeing for Managers](#) webpages also provide relevant information which may be of assistance to both colleagues and managers supporting their team members.

Related Policies

Adoption Leave Policy

Flexible Working Principles and Employee Guidance

Formal Flexible Working Request Policy

Maternity Leave Policy

Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Fact Sheet

Paternity/Partner Leave Policy

Parental Leave Policy

Shared Parental Leave Policy

Time off for Public Duties and Special Leave Policy

Reviewed June 2025

APPENDIX 1 - NEONATAL CARE LEAVE APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Surname:	
First name(s):	
Pay Number:	

NEONATAL CARE INFORMATION	
Child's date of birth (and date of adoption where relevant):	
Date(s) the child started receiving neonatal care:	
Date(s) the child stopped receiving neonatal care:	
Start date of proposed neonatal care leave:	
Number of weeks leave to be taken:	

YOUR DECLARATION	
<p>You must be able to tick all three boxes to qualify for neonatal care leave.</p> <p>I declare that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the date of birth, I am <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the child's parent, or - the child's intended parent (in relation to surrogacy/adoption), or the partner of the child's mother <input type="checkbox"/> • I have (or expect to have) responsibility for the child's upbringing, and <input type="checkbox"/> • I am taking the leave to provide care for the child <input type="checkbox"/> • My baby was admitted to neonatal care within 28 days of birth and remained in neonatal care for at least 7 continuous days. <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please return your completed form to HRServicesteam@leedsbeckett.ac.uk (copied to your manager). A word version of the form is available on the [HR and Payroll forms webpage](#)