

Family Friendly Policy

April 2025

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1. Purpose

Whether you are expecting a baby or adopting a child, we understand and appreciate that this is a significant life event that requires our support and we will work with you to plan for these occasions to ensure a positive experience throughout. When you request any type of parental leave, we will work together to ensure we can alleviate any potential impact to our business and our customers.

This policy applies to everybody employed by Speedy Hire and sets out a colleague's rights and responsibilities ahead of and during any period of Family Friendly Leave. Further information can be found within the People Policies – Colleague Support Pack or you can contact the People Team for advice.

If you require support due to kinship leave or because you are a foster carer, please contact the People Team for additional information.

2. Leave Types

Maternity Leave is a period of leave taken by a person giving birth (including surrogates) for a maximum of 52 weeks. Following the birth of a baby, it is compulsory for colleagues to take at least 2 weeks maternity leave (or 4 weeks if you work in an operational environment).

Paternity Leave can be taken by an expectant father (or other person in the relationship who is not taking maternity leave and is responsible for the child's upbringing) for a maximum of 2 weeks.

Adoption Leave can be taken if you are the primary carer for an adoptive child or a child born through a surrogacy arrangement. Only one member of a couple can take paid adoption leave.

Shared Parental Leave is a leave that substitutes maternity or adoption leave entitlements to allow both parents to share time off up to a maximum of 50 weeks.

Parental Leave is 18 weeks' unpaid leave that can be taken for each child up to their 18th birthday. Leave must be taken in whole week blocks and is usually limited to 4 weeks per year.

Dependant Leave – please see our Leave Policy, and refer to the unexpected leave information.

Neonatal Care Leave is an additional leave entitlement if your baby spends time in neonatal care (or equivalent) for longer than 7 days.

3. Maternity Leave & Pay

We want to ensure that all colleagues feel supported therefore if you find out you are pregnant, we ask that you inform your manager as soon as you feel comfortable enough to do so. This will help us to reorganise work or meetings as appropriate to accommodate any appointments that you may have. If you are looking to take any type of maternity leave, you must notify your employer before your 25th week of pregnancy (15 weeks before your estimated due date).

You should provide your manager with a MATB1 form which is a certificate given to you around your 20th week of pregnancy - this will confirm your due date. Managers should forward this notification to the People Team as soon as practically possible.

During your pregnancy, we will carry out an ongoing risk assessment to ensure your working environment is appropriate and make any reasonable adjustments necessary for you and your baby. If at any point you require additional support, please speak to your manager or the People Team. Adjustments may include:

- Temporarily adjusting your working conditions and/or hours of work.
- Temporarily reviewing your workload and responsibilities

- Offering a suitable alternative to your contractual role (terms and conditions will remain the same during this period)

All pregnant colleagues are entitled to take reasonable time off with full pay during working hours to attend antenatal care appointments that have been organised by your GP, midwife or health visitor. You should give your manager as much notice as you can for any upcoming appointments.

You are entitled to take up to 52 weeks maternity leave. This can commence at any time 11 weeks before your due date or you may decide to work continuously up until your baby is born (if it is safe to do so). If your baby arrives early, maternity leave will automatically start from the date your baby is born.

You will receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks if you have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks continuing into the 15th week before the baby is due.

If you qualify for SMP, Speedy Hire operates an enhanced maternity pay scheme where you will receive enhanced payment for 6 months of your maternity leave - the first 12 weeks being paid in full, and a further 12 weeks paid at 50%. Following this, you will receive SMP up to week 39. If you choose to take 52 weeks maternity leave, the remaining weeks will be unpaid.

If you have not been employed for long enough to be eligible for SMP, you should enquire as to whether you are eligible for Maternity Allowance. All information including eligibility and how to apply is detailed on the Government website.

4. Paternity Leave & Pay

You are eligible to take Paternity Leave if you have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks continuing into the 15th week before the baby is due and either:

- You are the child's biological father.
- Your partner is having a baby, adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement.
- You've been told you've been matched with a child for adoption in the UK.
- You're given the date the child arrives in the UK, for an overseas adoption.

You must inform your manager in writing (usually 14 weeks before the estimated due date) if you wish to take Paternity Leave and complete an SC3 Form.

Paternity Leave is a two week entitlement which must be taken in week blocks, anytime before the child's first birthday. You must give your employer 28 days notice of when you'd like to take the leave and it cannot be taken as individual days. Speedy Hire operates an enhanced paternity pay scheme, you will be paid in full for the first week and then you will be paid Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) which is a prescribed rate set by the Government each year for the second week.

If you have notified us that you'd like your leave to commence following the baby's birth, your leave will start on the day in which the child is born (it cannot start earlier), regardless of whether they are born early or late.

You are entitled to take unpaid time off to attend two antenatal appointments to accompany each pregnant partner (or the surrogate mother). You should give your manager as much notice as you can for any upcoming appointments. To limit the impact on pay, speak to your manager about whether you can use annual leave or make up the hours lost at an alternative time.

5. Adoption Leave & Pay

For the purposes of this Policy, we have split Adoption Leave into two sections due to the differing processes between UK and Republic of Ireland.

UK Colleagues

Colleagues that are in the process of adopting a child or in a 'fostering to adopt' scheme may be eligible for Adoption Leave. If you are part of a couple looking to adopt a child, only one of you can request Adoption Leave. Couples will be split as follows:

- Primary Carer – this person will follow the same principles as Maternity Leave.
- Secondary Carer – this person will be entitled to request Paternity Leave.

To request Adoption Leave, you must inform your manager within a minimum of 7 days of being told you have been matched with a child for adoption. Where this is not possible, you should let your manager know at the earliest opportunity.

You must provide a copy of the documents from the adoption agency to support your request and sign a declaration to confirm you have chosen to take Adoption Leave rather than Paternity Leave. You must also confirm:

- When you expect the child to be placed with you.
- The dates you'd like your leave to begin and end.

You will be entitled to take up to 52 weeks of Adoption Leave and can choose to start from the date you are matched with a child, or 14 days before the expected placement date (28 days for overseas adoption). To be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), you must have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks before the beginning of the week when you're matched with the child.

If you qualify for SAP, Speedy Hire operates an enhanced adoption pay scheme where you will receive enhanced payment for 6 months of your adoption leave - the first 12 weeks being paid in full, and a further 12 weeks paid at 50%. Following this, you will receive SAP up to week 39. If you choose to take 52 weeks adoption leave, the remaining weeks will be unpaid.

If the adoption process is disrupted, your entitlement to Adoption Leave will continue for a further 8 weeks from the end of the week in which the disruption occurred, unless your entitlement to leave and/or pay would have ended earlier.

Republic of Ireland Colleagues

Prior to the adoption process, colleagues are entitled to paid time off to attend preparation classes and pre-adoption meetings with social workers or Health Service Executive officials, as required.

As you are obliged to attend these meetings, you must inform your manager at least 2 weeks before you are scheduled to attend. Your manager may ask for documents to evidence the appointment date and times.

Within 4 weeks of being matched with a child, you must notify your manager to confirm:

- The date of placement.
- How much leave you'd like to take.
- When you'd like your leave to start.

You are entitled to take up to 40 weeks Adoption Leave, taken as 24 weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave and a further 16 weeks Additional Adoption Leave.

Social Welfare Adoptive Benefit (SWAB) is payable for up to 24 weeks. Speedy Hire operates an enhanced adoption pay scheme where you will receive enhanced payment for 6 months of your adoption leave - the first 12 weeks being paid in full, and a further 12 weeks paid at 50%. Following this, if you

decided to take the further 16 weeks, this will be unpaid. To be eligible for SWAB, you must provide a valid AB1 Social Welfare Form at least 6 weeks before you intend to start Adoption Leave.

You are entitled to SWAB if:

- You are a colleague in insurable employment that is covered by the Adoption Leave Act 1995-2005, immediately before the first day of your Adoption Leave.
- You have provided Speedy Hire with the AB1 Form at least 6 weeks in advance.
- You satisfy certain PRSI contribution conditions.

Following your adoption leave, if you require time off to look after your child, you may qualify for Force Majeure Leave. Please speak to the People Team for more information.

6. Shared Parental Leave & Pay

Taking Shared Parental Leave (SPL) offers parents more flexibility on how and when leave is taken. You are entitled to SPL if you:

- Are the mother, father, part of a couple in a same sex relationship, main adopter or partner of the main adopter for a child.
- Have (or share) 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 childbirth, or before the beginning of the week when you've matched with a child.

Whether employed by Speedy Hire or not, the father, spouse or secondary carer who is requesting SPL must:

- Have been employed or self-employed during at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.
- Have average weekly earnings of at least £30 for any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- Have the main responsibility for the child from the date of the birth.

The first 2 weeks (or 4 weeks if you work in an operational environment) must be taken as compulsory Maternity or Adoption Leave which then leaves 50 weeks that can be shared between parents by either taking time off together or taking it in turns.

If you take a period of Maternity or Adoption Leave, you must give at least 8 weeks' notice to end this leave before taking SPL. However, SPL can start during the notice period which may result in both parents being off at the same time. For further information and examples, please refer to People Policies – Colleague Support Pack

You can submit 3 separate notices requesting periods of SPL. If you request intermittent blocks of leave where you intend to return to work for a period of time before going off again, your manager will discuss whether or not they can accommodate the request. If they refuse, you may be required to take one block in full or agree alternative dates with your manager.

7. Neonatal Care

As of April 2025, Neonatal Care Leave has been introduced to allow parents additional time off to be with a baby who is receiving neonatal care.

This leave is a day one right and eligible parents can take this leave once their child has been in neonatal care for at least 7 consecutive days. Parents who have a baby admitted to neonatal care up to the age of 28 days might be eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave. This includes father and partners of birth parents.

We will enhance any pay entitlement by the amount of weeks eligible for Neonatal Care Leave.

8. Unpaid Parental Leave

You are entitled to request up to 4 weeks of Parental Leave per year for each child you have parental responsibilities for, up to a maximum of 18 weeks. You must have at least one year's service and declare any parental leave taken during previous employment.

Parental leave must be taken as week blocks unless you receive a disability living allowance or personal independence payment for your child.

If you need a short period of leave for reasons relating to childcare, please refer to our Leave Policy.

9. Returning to Work

When you are nearing the end of your leave (whether this be Maternity, Adoption or Shared Parental), your manager will agree a return to work plan with you in advance of your return date. This will include the date you will officially return to the business, what your first couple of weeks will look like and schedule any training you may need to undertake.

If you would like to make a formal request for flexible working to amend the hours, days or location which you work, you should follow our Flexible Working Policy and submit a formal application to your manager at least 2 months before of your return to work date so it can be considered in full.

If you decide you do not want to return to work after taking Maternity, Adoption or Shared Parental Leave, you will ultimately resign from your position in the usual way, confirming your intent to leave in writing and giving the notice detailed within your contract of employment.

If you are unable to return to work due to illness or injury, our Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

Issue Control Sheet

Issue Record Sheet		
Issue	Amendment Date	Comment
07	08/04/2025	Amended Neonatal Leave Care as per legislation. Added enhanced maternity, adoption and paternity pay.

Document Authors		
Name	Job Title	Date
Katherine Kerr	People Policy & Compliance Manager	8 th April 2025

Document Approval		
Name	Job Title	Date
Austen Mirner	People Director	8 th April 2025
Ellie Armour	Chief People Officer	8 th April 2025