Shared parental leave (SPL) is designed to give parents more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption.

If you are eligible you can share up to 50 weeks leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between both parents during the child’s first year. You can take it in turns or take time off together to look after your child.

If you intend to take SPL you should contact your manager to arrange an informal discussion as early as possible about your leave request. Your manager should arrange a meeting with you to talk about your intentions and how you expect to use your SPL entitlement. The purpose of any meeting is to discuss the leave proposed and what will happen when you are away from work.

**Curtailment notice**
The mother/adopter must give 8 weeks notice of when they wish to end (curtail) their maternity/adoption leave before the end of their maternity/adoption leave to allow SPL take place using the curtailing notice.
Shared Parental Leave Guidance

The partner can start their SPL whilst the mother/adopter is on maternity/adoption leave, as long as she has confirmed the date she will curtail her maternity leave.

The mother/adopter must provide the curtailment notice at the same time as the notice of entitlement and intention form to take SPL.

Withdrawal of maternity leave curtailment notice
The withdrawal of a curtailment notice must be in writing. The curtailment notice can be withdrawn if:

- the mother/adopter has not returned to work
- it is discovered that neither the mother/adopter nor the partner are entitled to SPL or statutory shared parental pay (ShPP) and the mother withdraws her curtailment notice within eight weeks of the date on which the notice was given
- the curtailment notice was given before the birth of the child and the curtailment notice is withdrawn within six weeks of the child's birth or
- the partner has died.

If a mother and her partner have already started a period of SPL or agreed a period of SPL which is due to start within 8 weeks following the withdrawal, they may be required to be absent from work on unpaid leave for some or all of this period. We are under no obligation to accept an employee back to work with no notice.

Notice of entitlement and intention
This is a one-off notification and is only to inform us of your intention to take SPL. This applies whether you are the mother/adopter or partner.

A separate notice to book leave is required once you wish to request specific dates of leave.

Adoption or surrogacy notice of entitlement
In addition to the notice of entitlement and intention, adoptive parents must also confirm:

- the date the parents were notified as having been matched with the child
- the date the child is expected to be placed with the parents and
- a declaration from the parents and consent to the amount of time the other parent intends to take

Evidence of eligibility in this case will be copies of documents issued by the adoption agency confirming the date the parents were matched with the child.

For surrogacy arrangements, if the intended parents have applied, or intend to apply, for a parental order then, subject to meeting qualifying conditions, the nominated primary adopter will be entitled to take adoption leave and pay and to end their adoption leave early and move onto SPL.

Booking notice
Your must use the booking notice to book SPL at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL to be taken by you. However, the earlier you inform your manager of your intentions, the more likely it is that they will be able to accommodate your wishes, particularly if you want to take periods of discontinuous leave.
Shared Parental Leave Guidance

Within 14 days of receiving a booking notice from you, whether the mother or partner, we can request the following information from you:

- a copy of the child's birth certificate (or, if the child has not been born, a copy of the birth certificate within 14 days of the birth - if the birth certificate has yet to be issued after this period, a signed declaration stating the date and location of the child's birth will suffice or a copy of the MATB1) and
- the name and address of the other parent's employer (or a declaration that the other parent has no employer)

You have 14 days from the date of the request to send us the required information.

You can provide a total of up to three booking notices per pregnancy (including the original request).

**Variation or cancellation of notice of entitlement and intention**

You can vary or cancel your proposed SPL dates after you have submitted a booking notice. You must provide us with written notice not less than eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled by the notice is due to commence. The written notice can:

- vary the start date or the end date of any period of SPL or cancel a request for leave
- request that a continuous period of leave become discontinuous periods of leave or
- request that discontinuous periods of leave become a continuous period of leave

If you indicate that you wish to take leave using a variation notice, this is non-binding until you provide a booking notice in relation to the new period of leave being requested.

**Continuous period of shared parental leave**

If you submit a booking notice requesting one continuous period of leave, you will be entitled to take that period of leave as long as you have followed the correct notification process. You should discuss this with your manager before you submit a leave request.

**Discontinuous periods of shared parental leave**

If you submit a notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave, we, in the two weeks beginning with the date the notice was submitted, can:

- consent to the pattern of leave requested
- propose an alternative pattern of leave or
- refuse the pattern of leave requested. If the decision is taken to refuse the leave, your manager must provide clear reasons for this to you.

Any response to you should be in writing. If agreement is reached within those two weeks, you are entitled to take the leave on the dates agreed.

If no agreement has been reached within that two-week discussion period, you are entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of leave. In that event, you must choose a start date for the leave that is at least eight weeks from the date on which...
the leave notice was originally submitted. You must notify us of that date within five
days of the end of the two-week discussion period. If you do not choose a start date
within this time frame, the period of continuous leave will start on the date of the first
period of leave originally requested.

Alternatively, if your manager has refused the request or no agreement has been
reached during the two-week discussion period, you may withdraw your booking
notice requesting discontinuous periods of leave. You can withdraw this at any time
on or before the 15th day after the notice was submitted. A notice for discontinuous
leave that has been withdrawn before it is agreed does not count towards the total
number of requests for leave that you can make (maximum 3 requests).

**Shared parental pay (ShPP)**
Only ShPP is payable to either party for the duration of the SPL period.

ShPP is available for eligible parents to share between them while on SPL. The
number of weeks' ShPP available to the parents will depend on when the mother has
curtailed her maternity leave and how much statutory maternity pay or maternity
allowance the mother/adopter has been paid when her maternity leave or pay period
ends.

A total of 39 weeks' statutory pay is available to the mother/adopter. As there is a
compulsory maternity leave period of two weeks, this means that a mother who ends
her maternity leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' ShPP with
her partner.

It is up to the parents to identify the periods of leave they are taking as SPL in order
that the appropriate rate of ShPP is paid. In all cases SPL will be paid at the ShPP
only (maximum 37 weeks). If the mother ends her maternity leave before any
occupational maternity/adoption pay has ended, this will be lost once the mother
commences SPL.