

Paternity Policy

1. Purpose

Helping Hands are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our colleagues and recognise that time with your children is important.

This policy sets out the rights of colleagues to paternity leave and pay.

This policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment. Helping Hands reserves the right to amend or adjust this policy at any time as necessary.

Colleagues will not be discriminated against or subjected to detriment for taking leave in accordance with this policy.

2. Entitlement to paternity leave

A colleague can take paternity leave for the purpose of caring for the child or supporting the child's mother if:

- They have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.
- They are the child's biological father and have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing; or
- They are the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the child's mother and have or expect to have the main responsibility (apart from the mother) for the child's upbringing.

To exercise the right to take paternity leave in a birth situation, colleagues must comply with the notification procedure. For support with any queries colleagues can contact the People Team on hrhub@helpinghands.co.uk).

3. Time off for antenatal appointments

If a colleague has a qualifying relationship with a person who is pregnant, they have a statutory right to take unpaid time off to accompany that person at up to two antenatal appointments.

To make a request for time off to accompany someone to an antenatal appointment, they will need to notify their line manager.

The antenatal appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse. The right to time off work is limited to a maximum of six-and-a-half hours for each appointment.

Colleagues should give their line manager as much notice as possible of when they need the time off for the antenatal appointments and, wherever possible, try to arrange them outside of the core hours / as near to the start or end of the working day.

4. Timing and length of paternity leave

Paternity leave must be taken as a period of either one week or two consecutive weeks, it cannot be taken in instalments.

Paternity leave can start on the date of the child's birth, or a later date of the colleagues choosing. However, Paternity Leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks of birth.

5. Notification

To take paternity leave a colleague must provide written notice by the end of the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth or no more than seven days after they and /or their Partner were notified of having been matched with the child, providing a minimum of 4 weeks' notice, stating the below:

- The Expected Week of childbirth or the expected placement date.
- The date the colleague would like their leave to start (which may be a specified date after the start of the Expected Week of Childbirth or the Expected Placement Date, the actual date of birth or a specified number of days after birth); and
- Whether they intend to take one week or two weeks' leave.

We may require a signed declaration from the colleague to confirm they are taking paternity leave to care for the child or to support the child's other parent.

6. Changing leave dates or cancelling leave

A colleague may vary the start date of their paternity leave by providing a written request and obtaining approval from their line manager.

7. Paternity pay

Helping Hands will support colleagues by paying Statutory Paternity Pay which is paid at the statutory limit set by the government for the relevant tax year, or 90% of the colleagues' average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

Statutory paternity pay (SPP) is payable for up to 2 weeks. SPP will stop being payable when the colleague returns to work.

8 weeks prior to the qualifying week we will calculate the average weekly earnings and ensure the average pay is no less than the statutory limit set by the government.

8. Terms and conditions during paternity leave

During paternity leave, all the terms and conditions of a colleague's contract except normal pay will continue. Other benefits such as holiday entitlement will continue to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

9. Returning to Work

Following paternity leave, colleagues generally have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had they not been absent. Their continuity of employment is not affected.

10. Neonatal leave & pay

From the 6th April 2025, all colleagues, irrespective of service, will be entitled to take a period of neonatal leave for a period of up to 12 weeks if their baby needs 'neonatal care'.

Neonatal care means care:

- Of a medical or palliative kind that is specified in The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2003.
- That starts before the end of a period of 28 days beginning with the day after the date of the child's birth.

Colleagues are entitled to neonatal care leave only where the neonatal care continues without interruption for at least 7 days beginning with the day after the day on which the care starts. The leave must be taken before the end of the 68 weeks beginning with the date of the child's birth.

Eligible colleagues will have the same employment rights and protections as parents taking other relevant family related leave.

If a colleague requires Neonatal leave/ pay, they must inform their line manager as soon as practicably possible or contact the People Team on hrhub@helpinghands.co.uk

11. Data Protection

When dealing with paternity leave, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy, (Privacy Information Policy which can be found on the company website). In

particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

Signed off by	Group Managing Director
Custodian	Chief People Officer
Held By	People Team
Issued	28.01.2025
Version	Version: 03
References	Employment Law
Changes Since Previous Version	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Changed format to reflect Sexual Harassment Policy FormatAmended any reference to 'HR' to 'People team'Amended any wording to reflect 'colleague'Amended clause 2 & 3 to reflect concise information.Removed clause 4 (added to clause 2 & 3)Amended clause 8 & 9 to improve terminologyConfirmed aligned with statutory requirements re pay and timeframesAdded in Data Protection Clause