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| Title of Document | Parental and Shared Parental Leave Policy (Birth and Adoption) |
| Name of Department | People Team |

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| What type of document is this? | Policy | |
| Which Helping Hands POL/SOP/W.I does this document relate to? | | Reference number of POL/SOP/W.I |

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| Which Operational Priority/Priorities does this document link to? | Governance Framework | People, Performance & Culture | | |
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| Custodian of document | Chief People Officer | Committee/Group responsible for this document | Policy Committee |
| Approval date and committee chairperson signature | 25.03.25 | When is its next scheduled review? | 25.03.28 |

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|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|---|----|
| Who does it apply to? | All Helping Hands staff | | | | | |
| | Does it apply to bank workers? | No | Does it apply to agency staff? | No | Does it apply to third party contractors? | No |

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| Purpose of the Policy | Helping Hands understands the importance of work-life balance and in some instances, employees may wish to request parental or shared parental leave. This policy outlines the arrangements for parental leave and shared parental leave and pay in relation to the birth of a child/primary adopter or the partner. |
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Role | Responsibility |
|-------------------------|--|
| Chief People Officer | Is responsible for reviewing and updating this policy and ensuring that the policy is communicated across the company through the Senior Management Team(s). |
| Helping Hands Managers | Is responsible for implementing and embedding this policy within all teams across the company. |
| Helping Hands Employees | Is responsible for adhering to this policy as directed by line managers. |

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the rights of employees to shared parental leave and pay following the birth or adoption of a child.

Shared parental leave should not be confused with Ordinary Parental leave, which is the separate entitlement to up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave. For further details, please refer to our Ordinary parental leave policy.

This policy applies to all employees, whether they are the birth parent/primary adopter or the partner. It does not apply to workers, contractors, volunteers, or interns working for the organisation.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

2. How shared parental leave works

Shared parental leave enables a birth parent/primary adopter to end their maternity/adoption leave early and share the remaining weeks of leave with a partner. It is aimed at giving parents more flexibility over how they share childcare between them during the first year of their child's life.

Shared parental leave can be taken at the same time as an eligible mother/adopter/partner/ or separately.

Leave must be taken in blocks of at least one week.

Employees can request to take shared parental leave in one continuous block. Alternatively, shared parental leave can be taken in a number of discontinuous blocks of leave, separated by periods of work.

3. Entitlement to shared parental leave if you are the birth parent/primary adopter

Employees are entitled to shared parental leave if:

- they have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week.
- they remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take.
- they have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth/adoption (apart from the partner).
- they are entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave in respect of the child.
- they have brought their statutory maternity/adoption leave to an end by giving a maternity/adoption leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of your statutory maternity/adoption leave period); and

In addition, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth/adoption.
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity/adoption allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks; and
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth/adoption (apart from the mother/primary adopter).

4. Entitlement to shared parental leave if you are the partner

- Employees are entitled to shared parental leave if:
- they have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the qualifying week.
- they remain in continuous employment with us until the week before any period of shared parental leave that you take.
- they have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth/adoption (apart from the mother/primary adopter); and
- they have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements set out in this policy.

In addition, the birth parent/primary adopter must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner for at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth/adoption.
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity/adoption allowance threshold in any 13 of those 66 weeks.
- have main responsibility for the care of the child at the date of the child's birth/adoption (apart from the partner/primary adopter).

- be entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave, statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity/adoption allowance in respect of the child; and
- have brought their statutory maternity/adoption leave to an end by giving a maternity/adoption leave curtailment notice (or returned to work before the end of their statutory maternity/adoption leave period).

5. Amount of shared parental leave available

The amount of shared parental leave that employees can share with their partner is 52 weeks, minus the amount of maternity/adoption leave taken by the birth parent/primary adopter.

If the employee is the birth parent, they must take compulsory maternity leave immediately after the child is born. This means that they cannot start their shared parental leave until two weeks after the birth of their child.

If the employee is the main/ primary adopter, they cannot start a period of shared parental leave until they have taken at least two weeks of adoption leave.

If the employee is the partner, they can begin a period of shared parental leave at any time from the date of the child's birth/placement. However, they are entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the birth/adoption of their child, which they will lose if shared parental leave is taken first.

All shared parental leave must be taken within the first 52 weeks following the birth/placement of the child.

6. Notice of entitlement and intention

Before an employee can book a period of shared parental leave, they must give their line manager notice of entitlement and intention. This is for the employee to declare that they are entitled to shared parental leave and confirm that they intend to take it.

We must receive notice at least eight weeks before the employee intends to start the first period of leave.

If an employee intends on taking shared parental leave, they must provide the People Team(peopleservices@helpinghands.co.uk) with a copy of the MATB1/adoption certificate.

7. Varying or cancelling the dates in the notice of entitlement and intention

Employees can vary or cancel the proposed shared parental leave dates set out in their notice of entitlement and intention by providing the People Team (peopleservices@helpinghands.co.uk) with written notice.

8. Limit on number of variations in the notice of entitlement and intention

There is no limit on the number of variations that an employee can make as a notice of entitlement and intention is non-binding until they submit a period of leave notice.

9. Period of leave notice

Once an employee has provided a notice of entitlement and intention, they must also provide their line manager with a period of leave notice. This is for the manager to book each period of shared parental leave that the employee wishes to take.

We must receive the notice at least eight weeks before the employee starts the first period of leave. It may be given at the same time as their notice of entitlement and intention.

The period of leave notice may state the start and end dates for each period of leave that they wish to take. Alternatively, if the child has not been born/adopted yet, the notice may state that the employee would like their shared parental leave to start either on the day of which their child is born/placed, or a specified number of days after the child's birth/placement.

Shared parental leave must be booked in blocks of at least one week. Employees can book one continuous period of leave; in which case we must accept your request as long as you are entitled to shared parental leave and meet the notice requirements. Alternatively, they can book discontinuous periods of leave, separated by periods of work.

10. Varying or cancelling the dates in the period of leave notice

Employees can vary or cancel the shared parental leave dates in the period of leave notice by providing us with notice at least eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled is due to start.

Employees can submit three period of leave notices per pregnancy/adoption. However, any notice to vary or cancel the dates in the period of leave notice will count towards this total.

11. Booking continuous leave

If entitled to shared parental leave, and following the appropriate period of notice, employees are able to request a continuous period of leave.

12. Employees' rights during shared parental leave

During shared parental leave, all the terms and conditions of an employee's contract except normal pay will continue. Pay will be replaced with statutory shared parental/enhanced shared parental leave pay if the employee is eligible for it. However, other benefits such as holiday entitlement and pension contributions will continue as set out below.

13. Holiday entitlement

Employees will continue to accrue holiday entitlement during shared parental leave.

Employees should make every effort to take any outstanding holiday entitlement before commencing shared parental leave or immediately after their shared parental leave has ended if your leave is likely to extend into the next holiday year. Any holiday entitlement that has not been taken because of shared parental leave may be carried over into the next holiday year with the agreement of Line Manager.

14. Pension contributions

We will continue to make pension contributions based on an employee's normal pay during any period of paid shared parental leave. The contributions that an employee may make will be based on the actual pay that they receive during the shared parental leave.

The organisation's pension contributions will cease during any period of unpaid shared parental leave.

15. Contact during shared parental leave

We reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with an employee during their shared parental leave. This may be to discuss plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work, or to update them on developments at work during their absence.

16. Shared parental leave keep in touch days

Employees can agree to work (or attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave without that work bringing their shared parental leave period or statutory shared parental pay to an end. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days.

SPLIT days are in addition to the 10 keeping-in-touch days available to a birth parent/primary adopter during maternity/adoption leave. Any work conducted on a SPLIT day will count as a whole working day and employees will be paid their normal rate of pay.

Any SPLIT or KIT days are optional.

17. Returning to work following shared parental leave

Employees have the right to resume working in the same job and on the same terms and conditions when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory maternity/adoption or paternity leave taken is in relation to the child is 26 weeks or less.

Employees have the right to return to the same job, wherever possible, if they have taken shared parental leave and the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory maternity/adoption or paternity leave taken by the employee in relation to the child. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, we will offer the employee a suitable alternative job on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

We appreciate that returning to work after a period of leave may require some flexibility. Employees have the option to raise a flexible working request where the business can consider flexible working arrangements.

Should an employee decide that they do not wish to return to work, they must give written notice of resignation as soon as possible, in accordance with the terms of their contract of employment.

18. Data protection

When dealing with shared parental 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.

TRAINING

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| Is training required? | No |
| Details of training | Not Applicable |

COMPLIANCE

How is compliance with the POL going to be monitored

Monitoring and potential review of the policy will be guided by Employment Law and Company changes.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

| | Positive / Negative / N/A | Comments |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another on the basis of their: | | |
| • age? | N/A | |
| • disability? | N/A | |
| • gender reassignment? | N/A | |
| • pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)? | N/A | |
| • race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)? | N/A | |
| • marriage or civil partnership? | N/A | |
| • religion or belief? | N/A | |
| • sex? | N/A | |
| • sexual orientation? | N/A | |
| If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable? | N/A | |
| If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative: | | |
| • Can the impact be avoided? | N/A | |
| • What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact? | N/A | |
| • Can the impact be reduced by taking different action? | N/A | |
| • Is there an impact on staff, client or someone else's privacy? | N/A | <i>If yes, privacy impact assessment required</i> |

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| What was the previous version number of this document? | 01 |
| Changes since previous version | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merged policy HHH-POL-70 Introduction is now clear and clarifies that policy is different to 'Ordinary Parental Leave'. Amended any reference to 'HR' to 'People team'. Amended any wording to reflect 'employee'. Added reference to providing MATB1 and flexible working options in section 6. Added section 18 'Data Protection Clause'. |

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| Who was involved in developing/reviewing /amending the POL? | People Service Director | |
| How confidential is this document? | Restricted | Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside |

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| References | Employment Law | |
| Associated Documents | | |