

Policy Title:	Adoption Policy
Approved by:	Finance, Policies and General Purposes
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Signed:	

To Whom This Policy Applies

This policy applies to all Council employees seeking to adopt a child from approved Adoption Agencies.

The right to adoption leave is available to men and women (whether married or single) who adopt a child through an approved adoption agency. Where a couple jointly adopts a child, only one of them (known as the primary adopter) will be entitled to take adoption leave (the couple can choose which). The other adoptive parent (known as the secondary adopter) will normally be entitled to take Statutory Paternity Leave, provided that he or she meets the relevant statutory criteria.

Adoption Leave

All employees, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to 26 weeks of Ordinary Adoption Leave and 26 weeks Additional Adoption Leave (subject to providing the sufficient evidence as per below).

Adoption leave can start:

- up to 14 days before the date the child starts living with the adopter (UK adoptions)
- when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)
- the day the child's born or the day after (if the employee has used a surrogate to have a child)

An employee can change their mind about when they start their leave, provided they give sufficient notice. They must inform their manager of the new date 28 days before the date they now wish their leave to start, or as soon as is reasonably practical.

Adoption Pay

Payments for employees shall be the employee's entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), where eligible.

Statutory Adoption Pay is paid for up to 39 weeks. The weekly amount is:

- 90% of employees average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks
- SAP or 90% of employees average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

This provision is the statutory entitlement. Details of the current rates of Adoption Pay may be found on the government's website www.gov.uk

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for adoption pay an employee must:

- Have 26 weeks' service by the notification week; and
- Be the child's adopter, i.e. have been matched with the child for adoption. A person is matched with a child when an adoption agency decides that they would be a suitable adoptive parent for the child.

The notification week is the week in which the employee is informed by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child.

The employee needs to have agreed with the adoption agency that the child should be placed with them and the date the placement should occur and provide the Council with the appropriate notice and evidence of entitlement.

Notification Requirements

Within 7 days, or as soon as possible after the day the employee receives notification from the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child, an employee must inform the Parish Clerk in writing of the following:

the date the child is expected to be placed with them for adoption;
the date the employee has chosen to start their leave and pay.

Evidence

In order to receive adoption pay and leave, the employee must provide the Parish Clerk with either a matching certificate and/or a letter from the adoption agency which shows the following:

the name and address of the adoption agency;
the employee's name and address;
the date the child is expected to be placed for adoption, or where the child has already been placed, the date of placement, and;
the date the employee was informed that the child would be placed with them.

Where an employee is entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) they must provide a signed declaration that they have elected to receive SAP and not statutory paternity pay (SPP).



Adoption Appointments

The main adopter has the right to take paid time off for up to five adoption appointments. The secondary adopter will be entitled to take unpaid time off for up to two appointments.

Leave During Adoption Leave

1 Annual Leave

Annual leave continues to accrue during adoption leave.

2 Bank/Public Holidays

Bank/public holidays continue to accrue during adoption leave.

3 Carry Forward of Annual Leave

The employee and their line manager should review annual leave arrangements prior to adoption leave being taken. Where taking adoption leave means that the employee is unable to take their full annual leave entitlement in the current annual leave year, the outstanding leave (including any days in lieu of bank/public holidays) can be carried over to the next annual leave year.

Continuous Service

Adoption leave counts as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes.

Pension

The following information relates to employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Employee Contributions During Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

Employees will pay pension contributions at their 'normal' percentage rate during any period of paid leave.

Employees will not pay pension contributions during any period of unpaid leave. However, there is a distinction between the following:

- Periods of unpaid Ordinary Maternity Leave, Ordinary Adoption Leave and Paternity Leave, when the employer continues to make pension contributions.
- Periods of unpaid Additional Maternity Leave and Additional Adoption Leave, when the employer does not make any pension contributions.

In the latter case the employee can, if they wish, choose to enter into an age-related Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount 'lost' during the unpaid leave. Information about this is set out in the employer's information below.

Employer Contributions During Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave

The Parish Council will pay employer contributions on the employee's Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP). APP is calculated with reference to the average pensionable pay the employee received in the 3 months immediately preceding the period of reduced or nil pay. If, however, the employee's pay during their leave is higher than APP, the Parish Council will pay contributions based on this higher amount.

APP does not apply during any unpaid period of Additional Maternity Leave or Additional Adoption Leave. The employee can, if they wish, choose to enter into an

age-related Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during the unpaid leave.

If the employee notifies the Parish Clerk in writing within 30 days of returning to work that they wish to enter into an APC then:

- The employee will pay 1/3 of the cost of the APC
- The employer will pay 2/3 of the cost of the APC.

If the employee notifies the Parish Clerk of this decision later than 30 days after returning to work then the whole cost will be borne by the employee, unless the Parish Council voluntarily agrees to contribute to the APC.

Returning to Work

Notification Requirements

Managers must assume that an employee will return after 52 weeks. An employee need only notify their employer that they are returning to work if they are going to do so before the end of the adoption leave. Otherwise, the employee simply returns at the end of the adoption leave. Please note that an employee can change their mind up to the point when they actually give notice and resign. If an employee can let their manager know when they are likely to return as soon as possible that would be appreciated.

Early Return

If an employee wishes to return early or on a different date than they had previously notified, they must give 8 weeks' notice.

Keeping in Touch

An employee can do up to 10 days' work during their adoption leave, in agreement with their manager, without bringing their adoption leave to an end. Working for part of a day will count as one day. An employee will not lose any SAP (Statutory Adoption Pay) for working up to 10 days.

Work is defined as any work done under the contract of employment and may include training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace.

Managers need to ensure that they keep in touch with their employee whilst they are on adoption leave. If you do not wish to be contacted please notify your manager. Newsletters and any other relevant correspondence will be sent to all employees whilst they are on adoption leave.

