



Royal Air Force New Parent Pack

Managing your Paternity Leave

A Guide for New Parents

The contents of this booklet are intended to simplify the procedure and entitlements of paternity arrangements and are for guidance only.

The following guidelines do not overrule policy in any way.

Please contact Air-People-PFSpt-ParentWillbg@mod.gov.uk for amendments or updates.

Time off for antenatal or pre-adoption appointments



Before we get into paternity leave, we wanted to remind you that if you are entitled to take paternity leave you may also request 2 days paid leave in order to attend antenatal or pre-adoption appointments.

All you need to do is apply by submitting a Request for Absence via JPA (selecting 'antenatal or pre-adoption appointment' from the Absence Type drop down box) or by using [JPAR001](#) and sending it to your HR Centre or Unit HR once authorised by your line manager. Although permission should be granted for such requests whenever possible, there may be occasions when for Service or operational reasons permission cannot be granted. There is no entitlement to travel and subsistence when taking this leave.

What paternity leave is available to me?



It makes no difference if you have become a parent through birth, adoption or surrogacy, you are entitled to two weeks paid leave which can be taken consecutively or as two separate whole week periods.

When can it be taken?



The two weeks leave must be taken within the first year of the birth or placement for adoption (unless it has been deferred for operational reasons).

Who is Eligible?



- The father.
- The spouse/civil partner or partner of the mother or adopter.
- The intended parent if you are having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement.

Conditions



- In the case of birth, you must have served continuously for a period of 26 weeks prior to the 15th week before the birth of the child.
- In the case of a UK adoption, you must have served continuously for 26 weeks by the end of the week in which you are notified that you have been matched with a child.
- In the case of overseas adoptions, you must have served continuously for 26 weeks by the date the child enters the UK.
- Where the 26 weeks continuous service rule is not met due to a break in service, you will be entitled to paternity leave on the provision that you have been out of service for five years or less; your previous service amounts to a year's continuous service.

- Applies to each pregnancy or adoption agreement (e.g. multiple births such as twins, or multiple children placed in one adoption agreement does not lead to entitlement to additional leave).

When can my leave start?



Your leave can only start once the child is born or placed with you in the case of adoption.

Babies don't always arrive on time. What happens if I need to change my dates?



If the baby is born early, paternity leave can be granted immediately by your Commanding Officer, providing operational circumstances allow.

How to apply



The application form to apply for paternity leave is available on the [HR Hub](#). If the [HR Hub](#) is unavailable to you, complete [JPAR006 - Application for Paternity \(Birth or Adoption\)](#). In circumstances where online applications cannot be accessed, [JPAR006](#) can be completed and e-mailed to your HR Centre or Unit HR once your line manager has approved the application. There is a list of HR Centres later in this leaflet. Your HR Centre or Unit HR will also request a copy of the birth certificate that they will send to DBS to finalise the Paternity Leave once the child/children are born. Although this is done retrospectively following the birth, it does not affect your entitlement to Paternity Leave immediately after the arrival of your child/children.

Application timelines



An application to take leave is to be submitted to your HR Centre or Unit HR using the [HR Hub](#), [JPAR006 - Application for Paternity \(Birth or Adoption\)](#) or by completing [JPAR006](#) no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.

Have you considered Shared Parental Leave?



Shared Parental Leave (ShPL) allows the person taking maternity or adoption leave to share a proportion of that leave with you to allow you to share the care of the child. If you want to know more, an additional booklet is available in this series which is available on MyRAF under parenting.

Flexible Working Arrangements



Flexible working arrangements allow an individual to have a degree of freedom when attempting to balance their work and personal life. While flexible working is not a right, all service personnel are entitled to request a flexible working arrangement

so they may better balance the demands of personal life and their service commitments.

Flexible working does not just mean variable start and finish times; there are a number of options available. The booklet [Flexible Working and You](#) outlines everything you need to know.

Registering a Birth on JPA



New parents should register the birth or placement of their child on JPA at the earliest opportunity. This is likely to be on return to work. Ideally the [HR Hub](#) should be used where a request online to add a child to JPA and upload any supporting documents can be actioned. Alternatively [JPAN005](#) can be submitted manually. The completed form and a scanned copy of the child's birth or adoption certificate should be emailed to the HR Centre or Unit HR.

Did you know – the [HR Hub](#) is accessible via your personal devices through Defence Gateway, making it easy to upload any supporting documentation.

Don't forget – if the other Parent is serving, they will also need to add the child to their JPA as well.

Will



You may wish to update/write your will on becoming a parent. If you have uncomplicated circumstances, you can complete a basic service Will form. As these need to be completed in hard copy and kept at the Wills Library in Glasgow, your HR Centre or Unit HR will need to provide you with the forms (will and envelope). Once completed the original needs to be returned to your HR staff for logging and onward post.

Details of a Private Will can be submitted via a Will Declaration on the [HR Hub](#). If the [HR Hub](#) is unavailable you should email your HR Centre or Unit HR to let them know where it is held so they can update JPA.

Change of PStat Category (PStat)



You may be required to change your PStat if there has been a change in your personal circumstances such as:

- You marry or enter a civil partnership.
- You are not married or in civil partnership but have full parental responsibility following the birth of your child.
- You have a child and provide voluntary financial support, but do not have full parental responsibility.

- You have a child and provide financial support through a court order/child support agency arrangement.

If both Parents are serving and are unsure of what Personal Status Category they should be, please seek advice from the HR Centre or Unit HR before completing an update request via the [HR Hub](#) or before completing the JPA Form [JPAN001](#).

Childcare Considerations



As a service parent you are responsible for making your own arrangements for childcare and meeting the costs involved. Waiting lists can be very long for nursery places so you should start thinking about places before the baby is born or placement date agreed. The RAF Families Federation has excellent information about [childcare and early years education](#) as well as tax free childcare for those eligible.

Neonatal Care Leave and Pay



If your baby is admitted into Neonatal care up to 28 days old and has a continuous stay in hospital of 7 full days or more, you may be entitled to up to 12 weeks of Neonatal leave and pay. For eligible service personnel Neonatal care pay will be allocated at the statutory rate and topped up to your full rate of pay. Neonatal leave can be taken either before or after paternity leave at the time it is required. The Maternity, Adoption and Shared Parental Leave leaflets set out Neonatal leave and pay entitlements for the other parent, should they also be serving.

Parental Leave



This is a government provision so available to all parents. It allows additional leave to care for a child by, for example, spending more time with the child during the early years, to settle a child into new childcare arrangements or to accompany a child during a stay in hospital. Parental leave allows each parent of each child to take 18 weeks unpaid leave. Parental leave can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday. Parental Leave is unpaid and, therefore, is non-reckonable service.

Support following a Complicated Birth



There may be times when the birth of a baby has complications such as the requirement for a C Section. A period of compassionate leave can be authorised by your Chain of Command to allow you to support your partner following a complicated birth. Compassionate leave should be taken immediately following paternity leave. This is covered in [JSP 760 - Chapter 26](#).

Mental Health



Whatever route a person has taken to become a parent, the transition to parenthood can take a toll on their mental health and wellbeing. Whilst there is much known about perinatal mental health for birthing mothers, there are common stressors that can affect all who parent from concerns around social and occupational support, developing their identity and role as a parent and for some families legal, process-bound or societal barriers can add significant stresses.

A separate booklet has been produced on Parental Mental Health. If you have concerns about your own mental health please do not be afraid to seek help from your Medical Officer.

HR Centre Contact Details

The Subject line of your email must be formatted like this
YYYYMMDD-App Title-Surname-Service Number-Station-O/OS/OSP

Air-HR SouthOpsSqn GMB

Benson, Brize Norton, Halton, Henlow, High Wycombe, Northolt, Odiham, Boscombe Down, St Mawgan, 78 Sqn Swanwick, MOD Lyneham

Air-HR LincsOpsSqn GMB

Waddington, Cranwell, Henlow, Coningsby, Aldergrove, 39 Sqn (USA), Syerston

Air-HR EastOpsSqn GMB

Honington, Marham, Wittering

Air-HR WestOpsSqn GMB

Cosford, Shawbury, Stafford, Valley

Air-HR NorthOpsSqn GMB

Boulmer, Fylingdales, Leeming, Spadeadam

Air-HR ScotOpsSqn GMB

Lossiemouth

Pregnancy Loss and Child Bereavement

This information is for both Regular and Reserve personnel.

If you are both serving and your partner suffers a pregnancy loss or your baby is still born, you should encourage your partner to contact her medical centre to let them know. Although the information will be shared by the NHS it can sometimes take time. We do not want a delay in providing support.

When you are ready, and if you wish to do so, you can also tell your line manager.

Pregnancy loss before 24 weeks

If your partner has miscarried or if the pregnancy had to be terminated before the 25th week you will not be entitled to paternity leave. Compassionate Leave can be authorised by your line manager.

Stillbirth and loss of a child

If the baby is stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy or is born alive and dies soon after, paternity leave can still be taken providing an application has already been submitted or leave has been started.

Commanding Officers should award compassionate leave for the death of a child. This is specifically covered in [JSP 760 - Chapter 22](#).

Cancellation of adoption or death of an adopted child

If you are going through the adoption process and you have received a formal notification of a placement date, the adoption is cancelled or terminated or if the child dies before they are placed with you, Paternity leave can still be taken providing an application has already been submitted or leave has started.

When you are ready, and if you wish to do so, you can also tell your line manager.

