

(Ordinary) parental leave policy

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Owner: **Assistant Director, People Services**
Responsible work team: **Policy, Pay and Reward**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for unpaid parental leave (ordinary parental leave) and the conditions under which the leave may be taken for all employees.
- 1.2 The [Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999](#) and subsequent (EU Directive) Regulations 2013 gave effect to the provisions contained in the Parental Leave EU Directive. They create a right to unpaid parental leave in respect of children.
- 1.3 Parental leave is a right to take time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments. The leave is unpaid with an entitlement to parental leave for a qualifying employee of 18 weeks in respect of an individual child before a child's 18th birthday.
- 1.4 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's [values](#):
 - Service – We put the public first.
 - Courage – We step up to the challenge.
 - Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
 - Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
 - Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
 - Integrity – We act with honesty

2 Eligibility to apply

- 2.1 You will be eligible to apply provided you:
 - Are the parent of a child/children under the age of eighteen years. (A parent for these purposes is: a biological parent, an adoptive parent, or a partner regardless of gender and sexual orientation, of the child's parent, if they live with the parent in an enduring family relationship.)
 - Have successfully completed your probation period/initial training or one year's service, whichever is sooner.
 - Give a minimum of seven working days notice (two tours for shift based uniformed operational and control staff) to the Brigade in writing of when the leave is to be taken. The Brigade may postpone when the leave is to be taken, for a period up to six months, if granting the request would unduly disrupt the Brigade's service.

3 Parental leave entitlement

- 3.1 You shall be entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave in parts or in one block following the birth or adoption of a child before their child's eighteenth birthday. In the case of multiple births there is an entitlement of 18 weeks leave for each child.
- 3.2 The minimum period to be taken on any one occasion shall be five working days (other than any final balance remaining, which may be less than this). For shift based uniformed operational and control staff the minimum period shall be one tour of duty, and any additional time must also be

taken in blocks of complete tours (broadly equivalent to weeks¹). The minimum period will be pro-rata for part time staff.

- 3.3 Parents of children with a disability may take leave in periods of one day. Eligibility for Parental Leave purposes is conditional on the child being in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, or a Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- 3.4 The entitlement to request parental leave is in addition to any maternity leave, maternity support leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave and special leave provisions that may apply.

4 Effect on leave, continuity of service and sickness absence

- 4.1 Periods of absence for parental leave of thirty days or less will automatically be counted as pensionable service. You will be required to pay the employee contributions at the level applicable had they received full pay during this period. A period of parental leave in excess of thirty days will not count towards pensionable service, unless you elect to buy back that period of service that has exceeded the thirty day limit. In this instance, you will need to confirm in writing, to HR Services whether you wish to make voluntary contributions to buy back the service affected by the break or accept a break in pensionable service. Periods of parental leave will count towards determining length of service and will be taken into account in calculating service for the purpose of increments, where this is applicable.
- 4.2 All periods of absence on parental leave, irrespective of length, will count towards the reckoning of contractual and statutory annual leave. In the case of part time employees, the annual leave period will be pro-rata.
- 4.3 If you are sick during a period of parental leave you must still adhere to the sickness absence procedures in [Policy number 1005](#) - Supporting health and wellbeing policy including the reporting of sickness and provision of certificates. Provided that these requirements are fulfilled, parental leave will be suspended and pay reinstated for the period of the sickness absence. You should notify the HR Services and your line manager when you are fit and are able to resume your parental leave or return to work. Parental leave will not be extended by a period of sickness absence.

5 Application, authorisation and recording

- 5.1 You must submit an application for parental leave to their line manager/officer-in-charge (in a role/grade not less than station commander/FRS D/control commander) on a Parental Leave request form electronic template available at: [file:///london.fire.int/dfs\\$/Shared/BrigadeWide/Templates/Forms \(Stations\)/Personnel Forms/Parental Leave Application Form.dotx](file:///london.fire.int/dfs$/Shared/BrigadeWide/Templates/Forms%20(Stations)/Personnel%20Forms/Parental%20Leave%20Application%20Form.dotx). A copy of the birth certificate of the child for whom the application for parental leave is being made must be attached on the first occasion. A minimum of seven working days notice (two tours for shift based uniformed operational and control staff) must be given to the Brigade, in writing of any request for parental leave unless there are extenuating circumstances which prevent this.
- 5.2 On receipt of the request, the head of section/officer-in-charge (in a role/grade not less than station commander/FRS D/control commander) must be satisfied that the leave requested is for the purpose stated and that the required documentation is attached to the application. They will then complete the form and make the necessary recommendation. Parental Leave will normally

¹ Watch based staff cycle extends beyond 7 days, so a full entitlement of 18 weeks becomes 16 watch tours in total.

be granted for the requested dates. However, the requested dates may need to be postponed, if the request would unduly disrupt the Brigade's service.

- 5.3 The Brigade may postpone when parental leave is taken, for a period up to six months, if by granting the request the Brigade's service will be unduly disrupted. Where a postponement becomes necessary this should be discussed with you. The reason for postponement and revised leave dates should be confirmed in writing to you no later than seven days after receipt of the notice to take leave.
- 5.4 Leave cannot be postponed where you have given seven days notice prior to the beginning of the expected week of childbirth to take the leave immediately after the time the child is born or in cases of adoption, of the expected week of placement except in exceptional circumstances, such as a change in the date of placement.
- 5.5 The head of section/officer-in-charge (in role/grade not less than station commander/FRS D/control commander) must send the completed form to HR Services before the leave is taken in order to arrange for the necessary stoppage of pay and for the details to be placed on the individual's e-PRF to show the leave allowed. HR Services will then write to the individual confirming provisions applicable during the period of absence. On receipt of the first application for parental leave, HR Services will start a parental leave register which will be filed on the e-PRF together with a copy of the birth certificates(s) of the child concerned, in order to maintain a running total of leave on the e-PRF. A copy of this register should be sent to the line manager. The dates of all subsequent approved applications will be recorded onto this sheet so that a running total of parental leave can be maintained.
- 5.6 The officer in charge/line manager will record parental leave details on the individual's PARC card using the appropriate coding for this purpose.

6 Return to work

- 6.1 At the end of parental leave, up to and including the full 18 week entitlement, you are guaranteed the right to return to your current post.

7 Records

- 7.1 Please send records by email to RecordsServices@london-fire.gov.uk. Records will be kept on your electronic personal record file (e-PRF) and retained in accordance with [Policy number 788](#) - Electronic personal record files (ePRF) policy. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with [Policy number 351](#) – Data protection and privacy policy.

8 Help and support

- 8.1 Please contact the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 option 3 and by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk.
- 8.2 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in [Policy number 290](#) – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.
- 8.3 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the [Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire](#) as set out in [Policy number 887](#) – Staff suggestion scheme. Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	07/05/24	SDIA	L - 02/06/23	HSWIA	09/06/23	RA	
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Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Reference to the "Authority" replaced by "Brigade"	14/01/2010
Page 3	Sections 5.5 and 5.6 updated to show new responsibilities and procedure	14/01/2010
Page 5	Appendix 1 reformatted, no content change	14/01/2010
Throughout	Updating of policy following legislative changes increasing the parental leave entitlement of a qualifying employee from 13 weeks to 18 weeks, with effect from 8 March 2013.	13/03/2013
Page 6	SIA date added.	28/01/2014
Page 6	Subject list and FOIA exemptions tables updated.	22/12/2014
Page 2, Paras 1, 2, & 3	Deletions and amendments to reflect the extension of eligibility up until a child's 18 th Birthday for all children. Reviewed as current.	09/06/2015
Throughout	Reference to PN712 – attendance management policy updated to PN889 – managing attendance policy.	21/02/2017
Page 3, Para 5.2 Page 4 Para 5.6 Throughout	Additional wording added re 'Exceptional Circumstances'. New paragraph instructions to notify HR of postponed requests. Update of references to Brigade anticipating new Corporate Governance arrangements. Incorporation of the "Business being unduly disrupted " term and minor re-drafting.	20/10/2017
Page 2, para 3.3	Sentence on legislation added.	07/08/2018
Page 2, para 3.3	Sentence on eligibility for parental leave amended.	10/08/2018
Throughout	Owner title and section names updated to reflect the changes in organisational structure and governance (the abolition of LFEPA). Role to rank changes made. Hyperlinks updated. Minor changes made to ensure wording is gender-neutral.	22/07/2020
Page 2, para 3.1 & footnote	Additional words added for clarification and footnote re conversion of tours to weeks.	13/08/2020

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Page 3, Para 5.1 Page 4, para 6.1 and 6.2 Throughout	Link to electronic form added Removal of loss of base posting reference after 4 weeks Minor re-drafting and change of references to HR Service Centre	01/09/2022
Page 3 , para 4.3	Reference to PN889 – managing attendance policy updated to PN1005 –Supporting health and wellbeing policy.	28/03/2023
Page 6	SDIA and HSWIA dates added.	24/07/2023
Page 5	Appendix 1 sample register removed.	08/08/2023
Throughout	Reviewed as current with minor updates made. Records, and help and support details added.	08/11/2023
Throughout	Inclusive language updated.	11/12/2023
Page 2, para 1.4	Values included.	25/03/2024
Page 4, para 7.1 Page 4, para 8.2	Data protection details added. Access to alternative policy format details added.	12/04/2024
Page 4, para 7.1 Page 4, para 8.3 Throughout	Record Services details added. Staff suggestion scheme details added. Job title changed from operations manager to control commander.	30/05/2024

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Leave	
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Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification