



**WILLIAMSBURGH**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## **Shared Parental Leave Policy**

### **Revision History**

Creation Date	February 2024
Reviewer(s)	Corporate Services
Approved by (committee name)	Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub committee
Committee date	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Policy Review date	February 2027

## Introduction

At WHA we know that having a new child is an important and exciting time and we want to support you during this time. This policy sets out the entitlements of Shared Parental Leave for new parents.

## What is Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental leave (SPL) was introduced in 2014 and enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child/children during the first year from birth/adoption. SPL provides parents more flexibility in considering how best to care for, and bond with their child. All eligible employees have a statutory right to Shared Parental Leave and there may also be an entitlement to Shared Parental Pay. This policy sets out the rights and responsibilities for employees who wish to take shared parental leave and pay.

## Who is eligible?

To be eligible for SPL, you must be:

- The mother/pregnant parent/adopter or
- One of the following:
  - The spouse, civil partner or partner of the person who gave birth to the child/adopter.

To qualify for SPL the person who gave birth/primary adopter must;

- Have a partner,
- Be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave and/or to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance.
- Still be working for the organisation at the start of each period of SPL.
- Satisfy the continuity of employment test by having worked for us for 26 weeks at the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy or when the placement is confirmed.

To qualify a spouse/partner must:

- Be in paid employment (does not need to be a WHA employee)
- Share the primary care for the child with the other parent at the time of the child's birth/adoption.
- Have notified their employer of their entitlement providing any necessary evidence.
- Satisfy the requirements of the employment and earning test by having worked for us for at least 26 weeks in the 66-week period leading to baby's expected date of birth or adoption and have earned an average of at least £30 a week in any 13 weeks within 66 weeks.

## Shared Parental Leave (SPL) Entitlement

You are entitled to take up to 50 weeks SPL during your child's first year of birth/adoption. The number of weeks available will be calculated using the pregnant parent/adopter's entitlement to maternity/adoption leave which allows them to take up to the maximum of 52 weeks leave. If they decide to reduce their maternity/adoption leave, then they and/or their partner may opt-in to the SPL system and take the remaining weeks as SPL.

A pregnant parent/adopter may reduce their maternity/adoption leave by returning to work before the end of their full 52 weeks entitlement or they may give notice to end their leave on a specified future date.

If the pregnant parent/adopter is not entitled to maternity/adoption leave but is entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) or maternity allowance (MA), they must reduce their entitlement to less than the 39 weeks. If they chose to do this, their partner may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of leave. This is calculated by deducting from 52 the number of weeks of SMP, SAP or MA taken by the pregnant parent/adopter.

You can take SPL as follows:

- For pregnant parents after the compulsory two weeks of maternity leave immediately after the birth of your child.
- For adopters you can take SPL after taking at least two weeks of adoption leave.
- For the father/partner/spouse immediately following the birth/placement of the child but may choose to exhaust any paternity leave entitlement (as paternity leave or pay can't be taken once any SPL or shared parental pay has been taken).

Where a pregnant parent/adopter gives notice to end their maternity/adoption entitlement then the partner can take leave while they are still on maternity/adoption leave.

SPL will normally start on your chosen start date which is specified in your booking notification, or any subsequent variation to their original notice.

Shared Parental Leave must end no later than one year after the birth/adoption of the child and any untaken leave will be lost.

## Notification of Entitlement

You must give us at least eight weeks' notice before you are planning to start your leave. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) to complete the notice of eligibility form.

### Requesting further evidence of eligibility

Within 14 days of receiving your notification, we can request the following further evidence of eligibility:

- Name and business address of your partner's employer.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate or a declaration as to the time and place of birth.
- Documentary evidence of the name and address of the adoption agency, the date on when you were notified of being matched with your child and the date on which the agency expects your child to be placed for adoption.

### Fraudulent Claims

If we suspect that fraudulent information may have been provided or if HMRC advises us a fraudulent claim was made, we will investigate into the matter in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy.

### Discussions regarding Shared Parental Leave

If you are thinking of taking SPL, we would like to have an early discussion about your entitlements and plans.

Once we receive a notification of entitlement, we may invite you to an informal meeting to discuss your intentions and how you are planning to use your SPL entitlement.

Although this is an informal meeting, if you wish to have an accompaniment you may bring along either a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

### Booking Shared Parental Leave

You must give us your notice of entitlement as well as your notice to take the leave, both in writing, and both can be done at the same time.

You can submit up to three notifications for leave which can be either for a period of continuous or discontinuous leave.

SPL can begin on any day of the week but can only be taken in complete weeks.

### Types of Leave

You can request either continuous or discontinuous leave:

1. Continuous' leave is when you take an unbroken period of leave e.g. six weeks leave. We will always agree to a request for continuous leave so long as you are eligible.
2. 'Discontinuous' leave is taken over a certain period of time but with breaks in between full weeks (E.g. five weeks SPL followed by 4 weeks back at work, followed by a further two weeks SPL). We will try and accommodate your request for discontinuous leave but if we cannot do it for business reasons, we will try and reach an agreement with you. If we can't reach an agreement

the following rules will apply:

- Within 14 days: if no agreement is reached or we refuse your request, the total amount of leave in the request MUST be taken as one continuous block.
- Within 15 days: you may still withdraw your discontinuous leave request and it will not count as one of the three allowed notifications.
- Within 19 days: you can choose when the continuous leave will commence. However, it cannot start sooner than eight weeks from the date of your request.

### Responding to your Shared Parental Leave notification

Once the booking notification is received, we will confirm in writing that we have received it and give you an answer in writing within 14 days.

### Variations to arranged SPL

You can cancel an agreed and booked period of SPL if you give us at least eight weeks' notice for any new arrangement.

Any notification/variation/cancellation, which includes notice to return to work early, will normally count as a new notification therefore reducing your total number of 3 requests allowed. This would be unless it is because your child is born early or because we requested the change.

### Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

#### Statutory pay

If you are eligible you are entitled to up to 37 weeks of ShPP. The amounts of weeks available will depend on the amount by which your partner reduces their maternity/adoption pay period or maternity allowance. ShPP may be payable during some or all of SPL, depending on the length and timing of the leave.

To qualify for pay, you need to meet the following criteria:

- For pregnant parent/adopters you must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance.
- You must intend to care for the child during the week in which ShPP is payable.
- You must continue working for us until the first week of ShPP begins.
- You must give us notification as set out in [Appendix 1 & 2](#).
- Your average weekly earnings for the period of eight weeks leading up to and including the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy or matching date are not less than the lower earnings limits in force for National Insurance contributions.

You need to give us eight weeks' notice advising of your entitlement to pay.

Any ShPP will be paid at the rate set by the government for the relevant tax year. For a notification form for ShPP please see [Appendix 2](#).

## Occupational Shared Parental Pay (OShPP)

If you have worked for us for one year at the 28th week of you (your partners) pregnancy/the week that you have been told you will be adopting a child, you will also be eligible to receive our occupational shared parental pay.

This is equal to:

- a) The first 2 weeks following the birth of a child / placement of an adopted child must be taken as maternity leave by the mother / adoption leave by the person claiming adoption pay.
- b) 5 weeks at full pay (including any ShPP)
- c) 16 weeks at half pay (plus ShPP at the lower rate, or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower)
- d) 16 weeks at ShPP (or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower)

The maximum joint entitlement will reduce proportionate to the amount of maternity / adoption pay that is used. In total a couple cannot receive more than the maximum shared parental pay outlined above, regardless of whether one or both parents / adopters work with us.

A week's pay refers to the basic pay given in your current contract of employment. In relation to point C above you should never be in receipt of more than your normal pay.

We will claim this amount back from you if:

- you fail to return to work; or
- you return but leave within three months.

If you fail to return, you will also have to repay us for any annual leave we prepaid at the start of your leave.

If you resign, are dismissed or your fixed term contract comes to an end before or during your shared parental leave OShPP will cease on the date of termination.

## Terms and Conditions

Your normal contract of employment will remain in force during the period of shared parental leave. Pension contributions will continue to be made while you are receiving ShPP but not during any period of unpaid leave. Your contributions will be based on actual pay, while employer contributions will be based on your normal salary.

## Holidays

Before you start your period of SPL, you should agree with us the dates of your annual leave. If it is not possible to take the leave within the annual leave year, we will transfer your remaining leave to the next year's entitlement. You cannot be paid instead of taking the leave.

If you plan to take annual leave before you return from SPL, you must notify us in writing giving at least 8 weeks notice:

- The date you want your SPL to end,
- The period you then want to take as annual leave and,
- The date you will come back to work.

### Contact during Shared Parental Leave

We will contact you to discuss your return to work, possible promotion opportunities, any special arrangements update you on developments at work during your period of leave.

### Shared Parental Leave in Touch Days (SPLIT)

If we agree, you may work up to 20 days under your contract of employment during your shared parental leave without losing your right to SPL or ShPP. The 20 days limit stands no matter how long your leave is. The 20 days can be worked at any time during your SPL apart from the first two weeks after you give birth.

You do not have to work these days and we do not have to agree to you working them.

Before you start your leave, we will discuss with you the type of work that may be done during your SPLIT days.

We will pay you your normal daily rate for working a SPLIT day. The day will be added to your wages and made up to a full day's work (taking into consideration the statutory and association maternity pay if any). If you work a SPLIT day whilst on full contractual pay then you will accrue an additional day's leave to be used at the end of your leave period.

### Returning to Work

We will give you written notice regarding when your leave ends and you need to return to work.

If you want to return to work earlier than expected you must give us eight weeks written notice to vary the leave. This will count as one of your three allowed notifications.

If your combined maternity/adoption/paternity leave and SPL up to 26 weeks, you will return to the same job as the one you had just before your leave started.

If the combined leave is more than 26 weeks, you will return to the same job you occupied prior to commencing your last period of leave. If this is not possible we will

offer you another job, which is suitable and appropriate and on terms and conditions which are no less favourable.

### **General Data Protection Regulations**

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own policy [insert name of policy or procedure]. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in [Any Organisation's] employee privacy notice.

### **Additional Information**

We know that it can be challenging to balance having a new baby with your work. Flexible working might help – If you wish to do so, you can make a flexible working request in line with our flexible working policy.



## Appendix 1 - Shared Parental Leave - Notification of Entitlement

Please complete all relevant sections of the form below in relation to your notification of entitlement to Shared Parental Leave. Remember you must submit this at least 8 weeks prior to any period of SPL commencing.

<b>Employee Name</b>	
<b>Name of Partner/Spouse</b>	
<b>Start Date of Maternity/Adoption leave</b>	
<b>End Date of maternity/adoption leave</b>	
<b>Total amount of SPL available</b>	
<b>Maternity – Expected date for child to be born</b>	
<b>Actual Date of Birth of the child</b>	
<b>Adoption – Notification or being matched with child</b>	
<b>Date of placement for adoption</b>	
<b>Amount of SPL both you and your partner intend to take</b>	
<b>Expected start date of the leave</b>	
<b>Signed declaration:</b> <b>(Must confirm:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meet/will meet the eligibility criteria</b></li> <li>• <b>Information given is accurate</b></li> <li>• <b>Inform the organisation if you are no longer eligible</b></li> <li>• <b>If not the mother/adopter you must confirm you are either the father of the child, spouse or civil partner).</b></li> </ul>	Signed .....
	Date .....

<b>Signed declaration from your partner confirming the following:</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>National Insurance Number</b>	
<b>Signature to confirm the following</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are either the mother/adopter, father of the child, spouse or civil partner of the mother/adopter</li> <li>• Consent to the amount of SPL that the employee intends to take.</li> <li>• They satisfy the employment and earnings test set out earlier.</li> <li>• Consent to the organisation processing the information contained in the declaration form.</li> <li>• Inform their partner should they cease to satisfy the conditions of eligibility.</li> </ul>	<p>Signed .....</p> <hr/> <p>Date.....</p>

## Appendix 2 Shared Parental Leave – Notification of Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

Please complete all sections of the form below in relation to your notification of Shared Parental Pay. Remember you must submit this at least eight weeks prior to any period of SPL commencing.

<b>Employee Name</b>	
<b>Start date of maternity/adoption pay</b>	
<b>End date of maternity/adoption pay</b>	
<b>Total amount of ShPP available</b>	
<b>Amount of ShPP you and your partner intend to claim</b>	
<b>Date you expect to claim ShPP from</b>	
<b>Signed declaration confirming the information you have given is correct and that you meet/will meet the criteria for ShPP.</b>  <b>In addition you will advise the organisation if you cease to be eligible.</b>	Signed.....
	Dated.....

<b>Signed declaration from your partner confirming the following:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Agreement to the employee claiming ShPP</b> <b>For the organisation to process any ShPP payments to the employee</b>  <b>That the mother/adopter will inform their partner should they cease to satisfy the eligibility conditions</b>	Signature: .....
	Date .....