

 WARWICKSHIRE POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Parental Leave (unpaid) (Police Officer & Police Staff)
REFERENCE NUMBER	WP104
Version	1.4

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	ENABLING SERVICES
BUSINESS AREA	Human Resources

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	May 2015
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	15/12/2028
RISK RATING	Medium
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW
TIER	2

Warwickshire Police welcome comments and suggestions from the public and staff about the contents and implementation of this policy. Please e-mail policiesandprocedures@warwickshire.police.uk

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1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

This Policy sets out the Warwickshire Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) arrangements for Parental Leave.

Parental leave is additional to other types of time off employees are usually entitled to, such as:

- maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave – for when someone's having a baby or adopting a child
- neonatal care leave – for parents to have additional time off to be with a baby who is receiving neonatal care
- carer's leave - for employees entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has
 - a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
 - a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
 - care needs because of their old age

For overview and eligibility criteria, please visit [The Bear/You at work/HR-Home/Family Leave Maternity, Adoption, Surrogacy and Maternity Support Leave](#) as well as [Employee Handbook](#).

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

Parental Leave enables individuals to take **unpaid** time off work to be with their child so they can:

- Provide care when usual childcare arrangements are disrupted and the time off can be planned in advance
- Spend more time with them
- Look after them when they are off school sick
- Go to school open days or events with them
- Settle them into new childcare arrangements
- Visit grandparents or other relatives with them

2.1 Entitlement

Individuals are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave for each child born or adopted.

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days. For example, if an employee works 3 days a week, one 'week' of parental leave equals 3 days. If an employee works irregular weeks the number of

days in a 'week' is the total number of days they work a year divided by 52.

The policy applies to police officers, police staff, and staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) but does not cover contractors, casual workers, and members of the special constabulary, police staff volunteers or workers employed by an agency.

2.2 Principles of the Policy

Parental leave may be taken following a period of maternity or adoption leave.

Individuals can request to take up to eighteen weeks unpaid parental leave at any time up to the child's eighteenth birthday.

2.3 Carrying leave over from a previous job

Parental leave applies to each child, not to an individual's job.

Unused entitlement can be carried over and used up with a new employer, subject to eligibility.

2.3 Qualifying Conditions

To qualify for unpaid parental leave, individuals must:

- Be taking the leave for the purposes of caring for the child
- Have parental responsibility for the child (and be able to supply proof if requested, for example, birth/adoption certificate, agreement for stepparents)

2.4 Administrative Process

A request should be made in writing giving 21 days' notice before the intended start date of the period of parental leave.

To take parental leave straight after the birth or adoption of a child, an individual should give notice 21 days before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or placement. In cases where this may not be possible, notice should be given as soon as practicable.

Parental leave should be taken in blocks of a week or multiples of a week and should not be taken as "odd" days off. In an emergency or unexpected event an individual might need a day or 2 to look after their child, annual leave, time off for dependents or special leave could be used.

An employee can only take parental leave in blocks of days or hours if they are entitled to one of the following for their child:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment

A maximum of 4 weeks a year can be taken for each child. A week is based on an individual's normal working pattern (see 2.1).

Employees still accrue (build up) their holiday entitlement as usual while on parental leave.

2.5 Postponement of leave

Parental leave requests immediately after the birth or adoption of a child will be approved where the correct notice has been given.

With the exception of leave requests immediately after the birth or adoption of a child, the organisation can postpone parental leave requests for up to six months if it is felt that the leave may disrupt the business. Reasonable grounds could include:

- the period that you apply for is at a seasonal or operational peak in demand
- if a significant proportion of the workforce has applied for leave or would be absent at the same time if your role is such that your absence at a particular time would unduly harm the organisation's ability to provide an effective 24/7 service to the public

The organisation will discuss this with you and confirm the postponement arrangements in writing no later than seven days after you apply for the leave, stating the reason for the postponement and setting out the mutually agreed new dates of your parental leave. The length of leave you are given should be equivalent to the amount you applied for.

If parental leave request is postponed, the organisation will:

- write explaining why within 7 days of the original request, stating the reason for the postponement
- set out the mutually agreed new dates for parental leave - this must be within 6 months of the requested start date
- agree the equivalent amount of leave originally requested

Leave cannot be postponed if it meant an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave, for example postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday.

2.6 Terms & Conditions

During Parental Leave, the individual will remain employed and will be entitled to the benefit of all their existing terms and conditions of employment other than terms relating to pay.

Information regarding pensions, including buy-back options for periods of unpaid leave can be found on The Bear, the LGPS website <https://www.lgpsmember.org/your-pension/paying-in/if-you-are-away-from-work/> (for police staff) or by contacting XPS Pensions Group on 0330054509 (for police officers).

3.0 IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

3.1 Risks

The effective operation of this policy will minimise the risk of successful action against Warwickshire Police and the OPCC under equality and employment legislation at Employment Tribunal.

3.2 Legal considerations

- Children & Families Act 2014
- Parental Leave Regulations 2013
- Equality Act 2010
- Maternity & Parental Leave Regulations 1999
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Police Regulation 33 Annex S

3.3 Training

No specific training required

4.0 CONSULTATION

The policy has been circulated to members of the Critical Friends group (OPCC, Federation, Unison, Legal Services, Risk Management, Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity and staff network groups) for consultation and feedback.

5.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to policy will be recorded using the chart below:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendments & Rationale	Approval / Adoption

OFFICIAL

May 2015	Liz Fletcher/ Tina Smith	Harmonisation	JNCC 03/06/2015
February 2022	Rhiain Foster HR Officer	Updated pension contact details and removal of references to West Mercia	
June 2025	Kasia Strods	<p>Minor review. Updated to clarify eligibility and entitlement for parental leave. Administrative changes only.</p> <p>1.0 Policy outline – family policies explained as often confused with parental leave.</p> <p>2.0 Purpose of policy – eligibility criteria expanded to align with statutory regulations.</p> <p>2.1 entitlement clarified for better understanding.</p> <p>2.3 Carrying over leave explained.</p> <p>2.4 Qualifying conditions – amended to include stepparents.</p> <p>2.5 Administrative process - clarified for better transparency.</p> <p>2.6 Postponement of leave - expanded to explain organisation’s duties.</p>	<p>Approved by Workforce Board 26/08/25. Republished 15/12/25</p>
June 2026	Kasia Strods	<p>Policy review due to legislative changes.</p> <p>From 6 April 2026, Unpaid Parental Leave became a day one right. The previous requirement to complete one year of continuous service has been removed.</p> <p>The following sections have therefore been updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Entitlement • 2.3 Qualifying Conditions <p>Minor amendment.</p>	<p>Approved by Head of HR June 2026. Republished 17/06/26.</p>

6.0 PROCEDURE

See attached flow chart below.

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

The Equality Analysis (EA), Health & Safety Assessment (HAS) and Risk Assessment (RA) associated with this document are available on request.

OFFICIAL

Individual notifies line manager in writing with 21 days notice:

- how much unpaid parental leave they wish to take
- intended start date and end date of unpaid parental leave



Line manager checks qualifying criteria (in conjunction with HR Support if required) that the individual:

- has one year continuous service or more
- is named on the child's birth or adoption certificate
- has or expects to have parental responsibility for the child
- is taking leave for the purposes of caring for the child



Line manager considers the individual's request



Agree



Postpone (for up to 6 months)
Individual receives letter within 7 days to confirm the reason for postponement and the mutually agreed new dates



Commence unpaid parental leave
(line manager and individual agree arrangements for keeping in contact as appropriate)



Return to work