



Time Off For Parents

People Division

Overview

This policy applies to all UK based employees of St. James's Place and is designed to provide information relating to Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Parental Leave whilst at work, during any related absence and following a return to work.

It provides a summary of statutory rights and, whilst not intended to be a complete or definitive statement of the law, should give you the guidance needed. Once you have read through this document, please contact our People Division by emailing people.operations@sjp.co.uk should you have any additional questions – they can also advise on individual dates/eligibility.

For the avoidance of doubt, this document is not contractual and may be amended by the Company at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to: All UK based employees of St. James's Place.

Policy Owner: Amy Morton, People Director

Date: January 2023

Next update: This policy will be reviewed in January 2024, unless process or legislative changes require an earlier review/update.

Please note that levels of Statutory Pay: Statutory Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/ Shared Parental Pay are normally reviewed by the Government every April.

Document History

Date	Version	Summary of key change/s
August 2018	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Template • Parental leave policy has been merged in with this document • Information on Tax Free Childcare and Sabbaticals has been included • Accrued leave needs to be taken • All wider options of time off for parents referenced
April 2019	1.1	Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) rate increased December 2019
	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced Maternity Pay increased • Paternity Pay and Leave increased • Clarification on salary sacrifice for childcare vouchers and pension January 2020
	1.3	Clarification on Paternity Pay and Leave
October 2020	1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on Adoption Pay and Leave • Clarification on approach due to stillbirths and neonatal deaths January 2021
	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on calculation of Paternity Pay • Concurrent pregnancies • Clarification on salary sacrifice top ups
February 2021	2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Statutory amount for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), Paternity Pay (SPP), Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)
August 2022	2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Statutory amount for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), Paternity Pay (SPP), Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)
January 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifying service shortened for enhanced maternity/adoption/paternity leave and pay for those whose baby is due from 1st January 2023 onwards
January 2023		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of being able to reserve a parking space once over 30 weeks pregnant

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Welcome to this Time Off for Parents Policy – we hope that it is a useful reference point for you. In addition, when you advise People Operations of a new pregnancy/adoption you will be offered the chance to speak with one of our team who can provide you with more tailored information and answer any specific queries that you may have.

1. Pregnancy

Time off for antenatal care

You are entitled to reasonable time off during your normal working hours to receive antenatal care. If possible, you should arrange your appointments at the start or end of your working day. Antenatal care is not restricted to medical examinations – it could include relaxation and parent craft classes if these are not available to you outside working hours. Fathers/partners employed by SJP are also able to attend two antenatal appointments during working time if required, when full pay will be maintained. If expectant fathers/partners wish to attend additional appointments, then Managers will try and accommodate this by offering the father/partner the chance to make up any missed hours at convenient times.

You should advise your Manager that you will be absent as far in advance of your appointment as possible. There will be no deduction from your salary for attendance at authorised antenatal appointments.

Health and Safety Safeguards for Pregnant Employees

On notifying the People Operations department of your pregnancy – by emailing people.operations@sjp.co.uk, a risk assessment will be arranged to ensure that your working environment remains suitable – a member of the Facilities team will liaise with you to arrange a suitable date and time for this.

Should you have any concerns at all regarding your health and safety at work whilst you are pregnant then please raise these with your Manager and/or the People Operations department at the earliest opportunity, so that action can be taken as appropriate.

When you are over 30 weeks pregnant, you are able to request a parking space at any of our locations where there are parking facilities. To book a space, please email the reception at the location on a weekly basis giving at least 24 hours' notice. If your plans change, please let reception know so that the space can be freed up. When requesting a parking space for the first time, please copy payroll@sjp.co.uk into the email who will be able to confirm to reception that you are eligible to book a space.

2. Maternity Leave & Pay

Maternity Leave

All employees are entitled to 52 weeks Maternity Leave, irrespective of length of service or hours worked. This is made up of 26 weeks 'Ordinary Maternity Leave' and can be followed by 26 weeks 'Additional Maternity Leave'. You are not permitted to work in the 'Compulsory Maternity Leave period', which is the two weeks following the birth of your child.

There is the option of a mother sharing her Maternity Leave. See Section 11 – Shared Parental Leave for more information.

When Does your Maternity Leave Start?

You can choose to start your Maternity Leave at any time after the start of the 11th week before the week in which your baby is due. However, if you are ill for a reason related to your pregnancy at any time after the start of the 4th week before the week in which your baby is due, you will be required to start your maternity leave on the first day of that absence. The latest date that you can start your maternity leave is your due date, as stated on your MATBI certificate.

If your baby arrives prior to the agreed commencement date of your Maternity Leave, then your Maternity Leave will instead start with effect from the day after the birth.

Notification Requirements

You must provide a MATBI Certificate (signed by your GP or Midwife) by the 15th week before the expected week of birth along with written notification of your leave date to the People Operations team using the Maternity notification form (available on the Intranet). People Operations will then write to you within 28 days to confirm your Maternity leave start and end dates. You can change your leave date providing you give at least 28 days' notice (i.e. 28 days before the original date or 28 days before the new date, whichever comes first). At this stage, the assumption is that you will take the full 52 weeks leave entitlement unless you indicate differently. You can of course return to work earlier than this, with notice.

If you are unable to give the required notice to start Maternity Leave because you have to start it sooner than you anticipated, as long as you give notice in writing as soon as you can, you will not lose your right to take Maternity Leave.

In particular, if you start Maternity Leave sooner than you anticipate, because you give birth early, you must inform the company in writing that you have given birth as soon as convenient.

Enhanced SJP Maternity Pay

SJP offer enhanced Maternity Pay which is payable to you during Maternity leave if you satisfy the following requirements:

- You have 13 weeks service with SJP by the end of the 15th week before the week in which your baby is due.
- You have ceased working because of your pregnancy in order for payment to start
- You must be pregnant or have actually given birth at the 11th week before the week in which your baby is due
- Your 'Nlable' weekly earnings for the period of 8 weeks ending with the end of the 15th week before the week in which your baby is due, are not less than the lower limit for payment of National Insurance contributions (People Operations team can advise this limit)
- You provide a MATBI Certificate signed by a Doctor or Midwife as evidence of your pregnancy and of the expected date of childbirth.

The enhanced maternity pay is calculated as:

- 6 weeks at 100% of your average weekly earnings
- followed by 20 weeks of your standard contractual rate of pay
- followed by 13 weeks at the lower rate of SMP set by the Government each year which is £156.66 per week until 6 April 2023.

It is worth noting that the amount of Maternity pay you will receive for the 6 week period is calculated based on your 'Nlable' average earnings in the 8 weeks prior to the 15 weeks before the expected date of birth. 'Nlable' pay is the amount of pay that National Insurance is based on.

Therefore, if relevant, you may wish to consider whether to stay in the Childcare Voucher Salary Sacrifice Scheme and/or the Pension Salary Sacrifice Arrangement and receive lower Maternity pay (because your NIable earnings are lower as a result of the sacrifices in place). Alternatively, you can opt out of the Childcare Voucher, Salary Sacrifice Scheme and/or the Pension Salary Sacrifice Arrangement prior to the qualifying period for SMP (for at least 2 months) in order to receive higher levels of Maternity pay, so long as you do so in time for the relevant qualifying 8 weeks. Please be aware that should you opt out of the Childcare Vouchers scheme you will not be able to re-join. You will instead have the opportunity to participate in the Tax-free Childcare scheme run by the Government.

SMP will be paid in the same way as normal salary and will be subject to statutory deductions of Tax and National Insurance contributions. You will be provided with a breakdown of your gross maternity pay whilst on Maternity Leave. This will be provided by the Payroll team, prior to you commencing Maternity Leave.

If you have a deduction from salary in respect of the Company's Charitable Foundation Lottery or Covenant, you can defer this whilst you are on Maternity Leave. Please inform the Foundation Department to enable this deduction to cease, if this is your preferred course of action.

Maternity Allowance

If you do not qualify for enhanced maternity pay due to your length of service or income, you may be entitled to Maternity Allowance if you have paid the required number of National Insurance contributions and meet certain criteria. Maternity Allowance is a social security benefit paid by the Benefits Agency (part of the Department of Social Security (DSS)). Please contact People Operations who will provide you with the relevant paperwork to enable you to apply to claim the Allowance.

3. Adoption

The rules relating to Adoption are very similar to Maternity. Details of which are outlined below and further information is available from People Operations.

Notification Requirements

You must provide written notification of the Expected Placement Date and your intended start date for adoption leave, no more than seven days after the agency or local authority notifies you in writing that it has matched you with a child (or where that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as reasonably practicable). The People Operations team will then write to you within 28 days to confirm your Adoption leave start and end dates. You must provide a copy of the matching certificate issued by the adoption agency once you have received it.

Time Off for Adoption Appointments

You will be entitled to paid time off during your normal working hours to attend 5 adoption appointments that have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. An adoption appointment will take place after an adoption agency notifies you that a child is, or is expected, to be placed with you for adoption. The reason for the appointment is for you to have contact with the child or for any other purpose connected with the adoption.

If possible, you should arrange your appointments at the start or end of your working day. You should advise your Manager that you will be absent as far in advance of your appointment as possible.

Adoption Leave

To qualify for Adoption leave you must be newly-matched with a child (under the age of 18) for adoption by an approved adoption agency.

All employees are entitled to 52 weeks adoption leave. This is made up of 26 weeks 'Ordinary Adoption Leave, which can be followed by 26 weeks 'Additional Adoption Leave', giving a total of 52 weeks. Only one parent in a couple can take Adoption leave – the partner could get paternity leave instead. There is also the option to split the Adoption Leave between Parents – see Section 11, Shared Parental Leave.

Adoption Leave can start:

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

Enhanced Adoption Pay

SJP offer enhanced Adoption Pay which is payable to you during Adoption leave if you satisfy the following requirements. It is paid regardless of whether or not you intend to return to work:

- You have 13 weeks service with SJP by the end of the week in the the agency notified you that you have been matched with a child (Matching week) and you are still employed by us during that week
- You provide a copy of the matching certificate issued by the adoption agency.

The enhanced adoption pay is calculated as:

- 6 weeks at 100% of your average weekly earnings
- followed by 20 weeks of your standard contractual rate of pay
- followed by 13 weeks at the lower rate of SMP set by the Government each year which is £156.66 per week until 6 April 2023.

Your average earnings are based on the 8-week period prior to your Matching Week – this is the week when the Adoption Agency told you that you had been matched with a child (see Maternity Pay for details about average earnings and what can impact these).

You don't qualify for Statutory Adoption Leave or Pay if you:

- arrange a private adoption
- become a special guardian or kinship carer
- adopt a stepchild, or
- adopt a family member.

Benefits during Adoption Leave are the same as those on Maternity Leave and as set out in Section 2 of this document.

Disrupted Adoption

There are times when adoption leave may be disrupted if it has started but

- you are notified that the placement will not take place;
- the child is returned to the adoption agency after placement; or
- the child sadly dies after placement.

In the event of disruption, your entitlement to adoption leave and pay (if applicable) will continue for a further eight weeks from the end of the week in which disruption occurred, unless your entitlement to leave or pay would have ended earlier in the normal course of events.

In the sad event of a child passing away after placement, you will be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave in addition to the above. See the Parental Bereavement Policy for further details.

4. Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is available to employees of either gender, for the purpose of caring for a child, or supporting the child's other parent, in the following cases:

- On the birth of a child, where either: – you are the biological father and expect to have some responsibility for the child's upbringing; or – you are the mother's Partner and you expect to have main responsibility with the mother for the child's upbringing.
- On the birth of a child to a surrogate mother where you are, or your Partner is, one of the child's biological parents, and you expect to obtain a parental order giving you and your Partner responsibility for the child.
- Where an adoption agency places a child with you and/or your Partner for adoption and you expect to have main responsibility (with your Partner) for the child's upbringing.

Enhanced Paternity Leave and Pay

SJP offer enhanced Paternity Leave and Pay if you satisfy the following requirements:

- You must have been continuously employed by SJP for at least 13 weeks ending with the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth or the week in which you or your Partner are notified by the adoption agency or local authority that you/they have been matched with a child.
- During the period of Paternity leave you must not be: – in your notice period; – in the last three months of a Fixed Term Contract; – on sabbatical leave

Enhanced Paternity Leave is 26 weeks and the Pay is calculated as:

- 26 weeks of your standard contractual rate of pay.

At least 2 weeks of leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth of the child or adoption placement and can be taken as 2 separate weeks if required. If the birth is early, the leave must be taken any time between the actual birth and 56 days after the original expected week of birth. The remaining 24 weeks leave can then be taken in up to two further periods within 1 year from the birth of the child.

Notification Requirements

To take Paternity leave you must provide your Manager with written notice (using the Paternity Notification form on the intranet) no later than by the end of the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth or no more than seven days after you and/or your Partner were notified of having been matched with the child. This written notice should then be forwarded to the People Operations team (people.operations@sjp.co.uk).

If the required notice is not provided within the timeframes stated above, you will be able to take your 2 weeks Statutory Paternity leave within 56 days of the birth of the child. However, it may be necessary to postpone the enhanced leave of 24 weeks until the required notification is provided in order for the business to arrange plans for the period of leave.

Dates of your enhanced Paternity leave (week 3 – 26) can only be changed in exceptional circumstances.

Rights During Paternity Leave

During your Paternity leave, your contract of employment will continue as normal and you will be bound by (and entitled to) all the terms and conditions of your employment, except those obliging you to come to work and those relating to salary.

Holiday entitlement including Bank Holidays will continue to accrue during Paternity leave.

You are still entitled to enhanced Paternity leave and pay if the mother/partner also works at SJP.

5. Stillbirths and Neonatal Deaths

In the very sad event of your child dying or being stillborn after at least 24 weeks of pregnancy, entitlement to maternity and paternity leave and pay is not affected.

For adoption or surrogacy, if your child has died or been stillborn after 24 weeks into the pregnancy, adoption leave and pay (if applicable) entitlement continues for a further eight weeks from the end of the week in which your child has died (unless it would already have ended sooner).

You will be entitled to Parental Bereavement Leave in addition to the above. See the Parental Bereavement Policy for further details.

6. Rights During Maternity and Adoption Leave

During your Maternity/Adoption Leave, your contract of employment will continue as normal and you will be bound by (and entitled to) all the terms and conditions of your employment, except those obliging you to come to work and those relating to salary. You will not normally be able to take on any other paid employment during your Maternity/Adoption Leave from SJP. Should you wish to explore other paid opportunities then please discuss these with your Manager and the People Operations team.

7. Impact on Benefits

The Impact of your absence on your Benefits will be as follows:

Discretionary Bonus Scheme Payments

If a Discretionary Bonus becomes payable whilst you are on Maternity/Adoption Leave (or after you have returned), the amount payable will be calculated based on the number of months you worked during the qualifying year along with the period of Ordinary Maternity/Adoption Leave and your contracted hours. Please note that any Maternity/Adoption leave that you take above 26 weeks does not count towards qualifying for bonus payments.

Different rules apply for any Bonus schemes which are deemed contractual arrangements and entitlement to benefit under such arrangements may differ from the position summarised above. If you wish to discuss your own bonus arrangements in more detail please contact rewards@sjp.co.uk in the first instance.

Health Screen

You will continue to be entitled to a Health screen (currently provided by BUPA) whilst on Maternity/Adoption Leave, subject to the usual rules i.e. you remain entitled to a check every other year. If you wish to arrange an appointment please call 0345 6040612 and quote Account Number 7707. If you need to cancel an appointment please ensure at least 5 working days' notice is provided to BUPA to avoid a cancellation fee. If a cancellation fee is incurred we may pass this on to you, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Childcare Vouchers- Currently In Receipt of

This scheme has closed to new members since October 2018 due to a new Government initiative being introduced to replace it. If you are currently in receipt of Childcare Vouchers these will continue throughout the 52-week Maternity/Adoption leave period, unless you decide to cancel them. The Company will fund this cost on your behalf once your full pay ceases completely and you are only in receipt of statutory maternity pay or nil pay until the end of your maternity/adoption leave.

It is worth noting that the amount of SMP/SAP you receive is calculated based on your average earnings in the 8 weeks prior to the 15 weeks before the date of expected birth/matching date. Therefore, you may wish to consider whether you wish to stay in the Childcare voucher salary sacrifice scheme, if relevant, and receive lower SMP/SAP (because your salary is lower as a result of the sacrifice) and continue to receive childcare vouchers for up to 52 weeks. Alternatively, you can leave the Childcare voucher salary sacrifice scheme prior to the qualifying period for SMP/SAP (approximately 2 months) to receive higher Enhanced SMP/SAP.

Please note that once you leave the Childcare Vouchers scheme you will not be able to re-join. The scheme has been replaced by Tax Free Childcare – more information below in the 'Returning to work' section.

Company Car/Allowance

You are entitled to keep your Company Car/Allowance whilst on Maternity/Adoption Leave. Servicing, repairs, tax and insurance all continue to be provided in full and you will maintain your entitlement to a fuel card expensed by the Company, if applicable.

Should your car become due for replacement (due to age or mileage) whilst you are on Leave, this will be deferred until your actual return to work.

Critical Illness

Your Critical Illness cover will continue during Maternity/Adoption Leave, with the level of cover based on your salary immediately prior to the commencement of your Leave. Please note that your children will automatically be covered from age 30 days old to 18 years old under the arrangement.

Holidays

When you are considering when to start your Maternity/Adoption Leave, do bear in mind the fact that your entitlement to Annual Leave/Bank Holidays will continue to accrue throughout your absence.

You will need to plan therefore how you wish to use this accrued leave. Options include:

- Ensure you use an appropriate amount of leave before your Maternity/Adoption Leave starts
- Use the accrued leave immediately before your Maternity/Adoption Leave starts, so that you stop working earlier
- Use accrued leave immediately before you return to work from your Maternity/Adoption absence so that you are returned to payroll and start to be paid earlier than your actual return date to the office
- Use accrued leave for a while upon return to work for part of the working week, to phase your return into work

We are unable to pay you for any leave that has accrued but is unused so planning is vital to ensure that you make use of this benefit. Normal leave carry forward rules apply.

Life Cover

Your Life Cover will continue during Maternity/Adoption Leave with the level of cover based on your salary which applied immediately prior to the commencement of your Leave.

Mobile Phone/Laptop

If you have the use of a mobile phone/laptop for work, then you can retain this during your Maternity/Adoption Leave should you wish. Please speak to your Manager about arrangements.

Pension

The Company will continue to make pension contributions on your behalf during Maternity/Adoption Leave including any contributions arising from your participation in the Company's Pension Salary Sacrifice Arrangement. The Company will pay for your Pension Salary Sacrifice contributions once your full pay ceases completely and you are only in receipt of statutory maternity pay or nil pay until the end of your maternity/ adoption leave.

You can opt out of the Pension Salary Sacrifice Arrangement if you wish. You may wish to do so in order to maximise the level of SMP/SAP you receive. As set out earlier, your SMP/SAP is based on your Niable Average Weekly Earnings (which are based on your earnings, post Salary Sacrifice) in the 8 weeks ending with the end of the 15th week in which your baby is due/child is matched.

If you wish to opt out of the Pension Salary Sacrifice Arrangement, please speak to the Reward Team in the first instance.

Do remember that if you cease a Pension Salary Sacrifice arrangement, you will no longer benefit from the additional 10% contribution that that Company makes to your contribution. Normal Company contributions will of course continue.

Permanent Health Insurance (PHI)

Your PHI benefit will continue during Maternity/Adoption Leave with your level of cover based on your salary which applied immediately prior to the commencement of your leave.

Private Medical Insurance

Your existing chosen level of cover will continue. If you wish to include your new baby/matched child in your cover, please provide People Operations with the full name and date of birth within 3 months of their arrival. Your level of cover and, if applicable, the level of taxable benefit which arises, will then be adjusted. If you don't advise People Operations within the 3-month timeframe, the next time that you can make changes to your level of cover will be in the following August, which is the scheme renewal date. People Division will only advise HMRC of any changes to your benefits when completing their annual return, so you may wish to advise them directly yourself to ensure that your tax code is amended earlier.

You should note that medical care for normal pregnancy is not covered under the scheme, although there is limited cover for "abnormal/complicated" births. If you wish to explore making a claim please contact BUPA on 0345 6090444 and quote Group Scheme Number 2602741 0000.

Share Participation

If you are participating in the SAYE Scheme, you can take a contribution holiday for up to twelve months at any point. If you elect to take a contribution holiday, the maturity date of the scheme will be delayed by the number of months you have suspended payments. If, whilst in receipt of maternity/adoption pay, there is insufficient pay to cover your monthly Scheme payment, your SAYE will automatically be suspended. If you want to continue payments despite insufficient pay, there are other options available to you. Please contact shareplans@sjp.co.uk for further details.

If a share allocation is made whilst you are on Maternity/Adoption Leave, you will be eligible to participate and will receive the invitation to join in the normal way. If you do not have access to your SJP emails whilst on leave, please ensure that you have provided People Operations with your personal email address should you wish to be kept updated on any SAYE/SIP opportunities.

8. Keeping In touch whilst on Maternity/Adoption/Paternity Leave

Before you start your leave, do agree a keep in touch plan with your Manager. This can include how often and by what means you would like to be kept up to date with things at work. You could agree a regular call or meet up with each other. Do let them know if there are specific things you are interested in knowing about.

Keeping In touch (KIT) days

You have the option to work in your role for up to 10 days, whilst you are on Maternity/Adoption Leave, without losing your entitlement to SMP/SAP. These are known as “Keeping in touch days” and can assist with keeping up to date whilst you are on leave. They can also help ease your return to work. If you do work any KIT days whilst on Maternity/Adoption Leave you will be paid at your normal daily rate of pay, plus SMP where relevant. You are only able to work up to 10 calendar days without losing your right to SMP/SAP. Please discuss with your Manager if you are interested in using these days as they need to ensure that there is appropriate work/training/ meetings available and you can agree suitable dates between you. Your Manager will need to inform People Operations for payment purposes. There is no obligation to work/provide KIT days.

You will be paid for a full working day for each KIT day so will need to agree your actual hours with your Manager.

9. Returning from Maternity/Adoption Leave

If you intend to return to work on the same terms at the end of your 52 weeks Maternity/Adoption Leave, you do not need to formally notify us in advance of your return, unless you plan to return earlier. Please liaise with your Manager in relation to your return.

If you wish to return to work before the end of your 52 weeks Maternity/Adoption Leave, please give People Operations and your Manager a minimum of 8 weeks’ notice in writing of the date of your return. If you do not do this the Company may postpone your return until a period equal to the 8 weeks’ notice has elapsed or until the end of Maternity/Adoption Leave – whichever is the earlier.

If you decide not to return to work following your Maternity/Adoption Leave, you must provide the appropriate written notice in accordance with your contract of employment.

Rights on return to work after Maternity/Adoption Leave

Ordinary Maternity/Adoption Leave (26 weeks)

You have the right to return from Ordinary Maternity/Adoption Leave (OML/OAL) to the job in which you were employed before your absence, on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied if you had not been absent. Contact our subject matter experts: HR Advisory team at employee.relations@sjp.co.uk

Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave (OML/OAL + 26 weeks)

You have the right to return from Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave to the job in which you were employed before your absence, or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is suitable for you and appropriate for you to do in the circumstances, and on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied had you not been absent.

Preservation of Continuous Employment

Any period spent on Maternity/Adoption leave (both Ordinary and Additional) counts towards your period of continuous employment for calculating your pension rights, holiday entitlement or statutory rights (for example to notice or redundancy pay).

Requests to Amend Working Hours, Work Part-Time or Job-Share

Should you wish to return to work on a different working pattern, please refer to the Flexible Working Guide which is available on the Intranet.

We are keen to support your return to work and will approach any requests for flexibility in a supportive manner.

We do have many different flexible working arrangements in place and are always open to new suggestions, should they also continue to meet the needs of the business.

We would suggest you discuss any requests with your Manager in the first instance before completing the Flexible Working application form, ideally starting this conversation before you commence leave. You are advised to submit your application well in advance of your return date as the process can sometimes take up to 14 weeks to complete, although we will do our best to respond to you as soon as possible.

Accrued Holiday Entitlement

You should avoid a situation in which you return to work after Maternity/Adoption Leave near to the end of a holiday year with several weeks of holiday accrued but untaken. This is because it will not always be possible to grant holiday requests at such times and you may find yourself losing your holiday entitlement.

When you return from Maternity/Adoption Leave you will be treated in the same way as other employees who wish to take outstanding holiday entitlement. You may wish to consider ending your Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave early and taking the balance of this period as paid holiday, in which case you should discuss this possibility with your Manager and People Operations either before or during your Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave. You are able to use up accrued holiday entitlement prior to returning to work, even if this means using it in a new holiday year.

Tax Free Childcare

Tax free childcare is essentially a saving scheme – parents open an online account that is used to pay for registered childcare. For every £8 paid in, the Government adds £2, up to £2,000 a year per child, or £4,000 for disabled children.

Tax free childcare is available to parents of children under the age of 12, or under 17 if the child has a disability.

The old Childcare vouchers scheme (no longer available from October 2018) offered savings per parent, whereas with tax free childcare, the savings are made per child. There are some eligibility rules. Both parents (if they are together) must be working 16 hours a week and paid at least the national minimum wage or living wage. If either parent earns more than £100,000, both parents are disqualified from the scheme.

Tax free childcare is unavailable to anyone who is claiming tax credits or universal credit. There is also a limit to the tax free top up. Parents can only receive up to £500 every three months from the Government.

If you are already in the previous Childcare Vouchers Scheme, you are unable to participate in the Tax free Childcare voucher scheme at the same time. Once you leave the Childcare Vouchers Scheme, you are unable to rejoin it.

You can use Tax Free Childcare to help pay for:

- Registered childminders, nurseries and nannies
- Registered after-school clubs and play schemes
- Registered schools
- Home care-workers working for a registered home care agency

To apply for Tax free childcare, you should visit the Governments Childcare Choices website – <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>.

10. Ordinary Parental Leave (OPL)

All Parents are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid Ordinary Parental leave in respect of each child, to be used prior to the child's 18th birthday.

This Ordinary Parental Leave entitlement applies to all employees, both mothers and fathers, with at least one year's service. This leave can be taken in blocks of one week, subject to a maximum of 4 weeks per year. Ordinary Parental Leave can be added on to the end of Maternity/Adoption leave, if wanted.

There is no statutory entitlement to pay or benefits whilst on Ordinary Parental Leave. Any requests for Ordinary Parental Leave should be made using the Ordinary Parental Leave Request form available on the intranet and discussed with your Manager. Once approved, the form should be sent to People Operations who will ensure the relevant adjustment to your pay is processed. Benefits (excluding pay), will continue during any period of Ordinary Parental Leave.

11. Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

Parents can share Maternity/Adoption leave. In such cases, the mother/main adopter end their Maternity/Adoption leave early and the remaining available period of the 52 weeks Maternity/Adoption leave becomes 'Shared Parental Leave' and either parent, subject to qualifying criteria, may take this. The time can be taken by both parents at the same time or split on a number of occasions by both parents. The total leave, including the period already used for Maternity/Adoption Leave, taken by both parents cannot be greater than 52 weeks.

Who Is eligible?

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) can only be taken by the mother or the father or a Partner with responsibility for bringing up the child, and both must share the main responsibility for the care of the child. If you're eligible for SPL you can use it to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, instead of taking it all in one go.

Qualifying Criteria

To qualify for SPL you must satisfy the following criteria:

- The mother must be entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave/pay,
- The mother must have ended or given notice to end her Maternity/Adoption leave,
- The employee must still be employed at the start of each period of SPL,
- The employee must have completed 26 weeks continuous service, 15 weeks before the expected date of birth/the matching date,
- The employees partner must meet the employment and earnings test (further information available from People Operations), and
- The employee must provide the correct notification requirements and provide evidence if required.

How does It work?

- Both parents can share a total of 50 weeks of leave
- The Mother/Main Adopter must take the first two weeks' leave after birth as compulsory Maternity/ Adoption leave
- The Father/Partner can still take two weeks statutory paternity leave (in addition to shared parental leave)
- Parents can take leave separately or at the same time
- The leave can be taken in one continuous period or up to three separate periods by each parent.

Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

ShPP is paid at the rate of £156.66 per week until 6 April 2023 or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. It can be paid for up to 37 weeks in total between both parents. The actual duration of payment will depend on how many weeks Maternity/Adoption Pay the mother/Adoptive Parent has already taken as this will be deducted from the 37 available weeks. This excludes the compulsory two weeks Maternity/Adoption Leave that the mother/main adopter must take following the birth/adoption. ShPP can be claimed by both parents at the same time.

Rights during SPL

- Your contract of employment will continue as normal and you will continue to be entitled to all terms and conditions (except those obliging you to come to work and salary) during any period of Shared Parental Leave.
- Both the mother and partner are entitled to 20 SPLIT days (each), these are designed to help you keep in touch during SPL, without losing your entitlement to Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). These days are in addition to the 10 'keeping in touch' (or KIT) days already available to those on maternity or adoption leave. SPLIT days are paid at your normal daily rate and you should agree your actual hours of work with your Manager.
- You have the right to return to the same job after a SPL unless you have taken more than 26 weeks SPL (when added to any other leave) or it is not reasonably practicable to return to the same position, in which case you will return to another job which is both suitable and appropriate.

How to Apply

Forms are available on the Intranet as follows:

- Maternity Leave curtailment notice – for a mother to confirm that she wishes to cease her maternity leave/ pay period and take SPL instead
- Notice of intention to take SPL.

12. Concurrent Pregnancies and Maternity Leave

If you become pregnant whilst on your current maternity leave, you will continue to be eligible for the enhanced maternity pay for the next period of maternity leave. The calculation of the average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks of maternity pay of the next maternity leave will be based on the earnings received in the qualifying period (see section 2 of the policy). Therefore if you are on statutory or nil maternity pay during the qualifying period, this will be reflected in the amount of maternity pay which you will receive.

13. Fertility Treatment

If you are considering going through IVF treatment then SJP will be as supportive as possible. For example, approval can be granted for time off work to attend appointments. Please see the Time Off Policy for more information.

14. Carers Leave

Time off work is available to deal with unforeseen circumstances relating to dependents. Further information can be found in the Time off Policy on the Intranet.

15. Sabbaticals

The opportunity to apply for a Sabbatical of between 3 months and 1 year is available to all SJP employees with 3 years' service. There is the option of applying for a Sabbatical; to follow on from a period of Maternity/ Adoption/Parental Leave. Please see the Sabbatical guidelines on the Intranet for full details.

16. Breastfeeding and Expressing Milk at Work

There are two private rooms available in the Cirencester offices for breastfeeding and expressing milk. For further details please contact People Operations.

17. Feedback

Should you have any queries or feedback relating to your role as a working parent at SJP then please do make contact with us to discuss these in more detail. We are always open to suggestions as to how we can improve the support that we provide. Please email people.operations@sjp.co.uk in the first instance.