

## Ordinary Parental Leave Procedure

### 1. Purpose

Ordinary parental leave is designed to enable staff to take pre-arranged periods of unpaid absence and is a separate entitlement to shared parental leave, maternity leave, adoption leave, and secondary caregiver leave.

### 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all British Red Cross (BRC) staff.

### 3. Procedure Statement

The BRC recognises the need to balance the demands of working life with the responsibilities of raising a family and so the statutory right to ordinary parental leave has been enhanced to enable all employees, who are parents to take the leave, regardless of service length.

This procedure has been produced in line with, and should be interpreted in the light of, our organisational values: compassionate, courageous, inclusive and dynamic.

#### 3.1. Setting out the process

- 3.1.1.** Employees are entitled to a total of 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child. This entitlement covers the period from birth or adoption up to the child's 18th birthday.
- 3.1.2.** Part-time staff will be entitled to the leave on a pro rata basis.
- 3.1.3.** All contractual benefits except pay will be maintained during ordinary parental leave. Pension contributions will be frozen during the leave and recommenced upon return to work.
- 3.1.4.** All requests for ordinary parental leave must be made in writing (includes email) with proof of parenthood/parental responsibility (i.e. birth certificate/adoption/fostering papers) to the employee's line manager and should give 21 days' notice, or as much as possible if this is not practicable.
- 3.1.5.** In emergency situations, it may be appropriate to take carer's leave initially and any subsequent requests for ordinary parental leave will then be considered if required.
- 3.1.6.** Ordinary parental leave should be taken in blocks of one week or more to a maximum of four weeks in any one rolling year per child. Where an employee takes only part of a week as leave, this will be counted as one full week, except in cases where a child is disabled, in which case leave can be taken one day at a time.

**3.1.7.** In situations where more than four weeks leave is required in one block, the employee may lose the right to return to their original post. If the total amount of ordinary parental leave, or ordinary parental leave plus any other statutory leave (i.e. maternity/secondary caregiver leave) exceeds 26 weeks, the employee will retain the right to return to a similar position with equivalent terms and conditions of service.

**3.1.7.1.** If employees take 4 weeks or less: they have the right to return to the same job after a standalone period (not combined with other statutory family leave) of ordinary parental leave.

**3.1.7.2.** If employees take more than 4 weeks: they have the right to return to the same job if they have taken more than 4 weeks of ordinary parental leave as a standalone period (not combined with other statutory family leave). But, if it's not possible because there have been significant changes to the organisation, they could be offered a similar job with equivalent terms and conditions of employment.

**3.1.8.** The BRC reserves the right to postpone any leave requested for up to a maximum of six months in instances where the requested leave would cause serious disruption to services. In such cases the line manager will confirm within seven days of the original request why the leave must be postponed and suggest a new start date for the leave. The BRC will not postpone leave requested at the time of the birth or adoption of a child.

**3.1.9.** People Support should be contacted to record ordinary parental leave in SAVi.

### **3.2. Lessons Learned from Procedure Evaluation**

The changes made to this Procedure directly arise from bringing it into alignment with the BRC Policy and Procedure Framework and through obtaining feedback from key stakeholders (Staff Association, People Support, Business Partners, Advice and Casework, International HR and the Diversity Networks). The changes also represent our commitment to our EDI strategy and making policies family friendly.

## **4. Responsibilities**

The Chief Operating Officer together with the Senior Director of People are responsible for oversight of this procedure.

The Senior Director of People ensures implementation and compliance with this procedure.

The Owner (Chief Operating Officer) oversees the development or review of the procedure document and provides support to the Lead (People Policy Advisor).

The Lead undertakes the procedure review (as necessary) under the guidance, and with the support, of the Owner.

The People Services Team provide advice and support for the implementation of this procedure.

All employees are responsible for complying with, and adhering to, this procedure.

## 5. Governance

<b>Associated policy document/s</b>	HR Policy Framework	
<b>Supporting procedure document/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternity Leave and Pay Procedure</li> <li>• Secondary Caregivers Leave Procedure</li> <li>• Shared Parental Leave and Pay Procedure</li> <li>• Supporting Carers Procedure</li> </ul>	
<b>Procedure/s superseded</b>	N/A	
<b>Legislation/ regulatory requirements and standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental Leave (EU Directive) Regulations 2013 (SI 2013/283)</li> <li>• Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3312)</li> <li>• The Employment Relations Act (1999): provides the right to ordinary parental leave for all employees who have been continuously employed for one year or more. The Red Cross enhances this right to include all employees who are parents regardless of service length.</li> </ul>	
<b>Endorsing Authority; Endorsement date</b>	Head of People Advisory; 07 2025	
<b>Approval Authority; Approval date</b>	Head of People Advisory; 07 2025	
<b>Procedure Owner</b>	Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Procedure Lead</b>	People Policy Advisor	
<b>Date effective</b>	07 2025	
<b>Interim update date</b>	N/A	
<b>Review date</b>	07 2028	
<b>Version</b>	3.0	
<b>Keywords</b>	paternity; maternity, adoption, caregiver, secondary, adopter, primary, statutory, SAVi, birth	
<b>Revision history</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of change (s)</b>
	1.0	All parents are now entitled to 18 weeks' parental leave. 21 days' notice should be given when requesting leave. If leave must be postponed, line manager should write to confirm reason and new

		agreed dates within seven days. Amount of leave requested should not change.
May 2014 Interim update	1.1	Leave entitlement is per rolling year. Included 'procedure' in document title.
January 2015 Interim update	1.2	'Ordinary' added to title to distinguish from shared parental leave policy and procedure.
April 2015 Interim update	1.3	Entitlement is extended up to the child's 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday for all children. Format update.
November 2016 Interim update	1.4	Updated HR job title to P&L Advice and Support
January 2017 Interim update	1.5	Updated requirement for proof of parenthood/parental responsibility. Lose right to return to same role if leave exceeds 26 weeks. Exception for parents of disabled children – they do not have to take one week blocks and can take the leave one day at a time.
June 2017 Interim update	1.6	Review date aligned with related leave procedures.
December 2017 Interim update	1.7	Updated to align with new HR Policy Framework and corporate procedure template
August 2019 Interim update	1.8	Pushed back review date to February 2020.
December 2020 Interim update	1.9	No legislative updates. Push back review to January 2022
March 2022 Minor review	1.10	Reviewed as fit for purpose. Review date extended
July 2022 Scheduled Review	2.0	Added section 'Recording ordinary parental leave' in SAVi.
July 2025 Scheduled Review	3.0	Transferred to the new template. Reviewed to ensure it's fit for purpose.

## **Appendix: Definitions**

**Accrued annual leave:** the amount of holiday time an employee has earned based on the length of time they have worked in a year.

**Continuous service:** the period of time an employee has been employed by the same employer without any breaks or interruptions.

**‘Partners’:** includes the spouse, civil partner individual and a person in a long-term relationship with another person. The right also applies to those who will become parents through surrogacy.

**Primary Caregiver:** a person who is the primary carer of a newborn or newly adopted child. The primary carer is the person who meets the Child's needs more than anyone else. According to UK law, only one person can be a Child's primary carer.

**SAVI:** the people management system that the line manager uses to manage employee's absence and all types of leave.

**Secondary Caregiver:** a person who has parental responsibility for the Child but is not the Primary Caregiver.

**Statutory Right:** means something that is required, permitted, or governed by law - usually set out in legislation passed by a government.