

# Adoption Leave Support

## Pack



NatWest  
Group

Last update: 28 July 2022

We regularly update this document. Make sure you have the latest version by downloading it from the intranet.

This policy and supporting information pack is not contractual and is subject to change at NatWest Group's discretion. It will be reviewed from time to time to make sure it continues to meet the Group's legal obligations and business needs.

## Who's this for?

This pack applies to **employees and line managers in Republic of Ireland (excluding agency workers)**

This pack gives employees and line managers a step-by-step guide to Adoption Leave which includes time off for parents of a surrogate child.

Throughout this pack we will refer to Adoption Leave – in all cases except where specifically mentioned otherwise, Adoption Leave includes those involved in a Surrogacy arrangement.

# What do we expect?

This pack tells you exactly what we expect you to do – you need to follow it to make sure you're in line with our policy. That means you should read it in conjunction with our Adoption Leave Policy.

The policy outlines our principles to make sure we're consistent in our decisions, as well as making sure we meet our legal and regulatory obligations. We're committed to supporting employees with balancing family care and work. Adoption Leave supports this commitment.

If you're dealing with a complicated case or if you need more help, you can contact HR (HR>Contact HR)

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## 1. Who to contact and when

### When to speak to HR People Services

If you can't find the answer to your question in this pack go to HR > Contact HR or call us on 0808 100 4242.

### Who to speak to if you need support

You can speak to one of the consultants through our confidential Employee Assistance Programme. They can help you with situations that you're finding difficult or give you advice on dealing with sensitive issues.

Call them on 0808 234 5303 in the UK, 1800 938 707 in Ireland or 00 44 203 936 1239 if you're in Gibraltar.

You can also go online. You'll need these details:

- Employee Assistance Programme
- External access: [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)
- Web ID: NATWEST
- Change the flag icon to choose your location

You can also download the app which will provide 24/7 access to support and information. Search for "GuidanceResources" in your app store to install the mobile app.

Web ID: NATWEST

## 2. Key actions checklist

Before taking leave, it's important that employees and their line manager take the time to read through this support pack. This checklist provides a summary of key actions you should take at each stage.

### Before Adoption Leave

For employees	For managers	Forms/documentation required	Completed
<p><b>What you need to do</b></p> <p><b>Adoption:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to Workday and submit your absence request:</li> <li>Within 7 days of being notified you have been matched with a child or at least 28 days in advance of when you wish to take Adoption Leave</li> </ul> <p><b>Surrogacy:</b></p> <p>Go to Workday and submit your absence request by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) that you intend to take Adoption Leave and specify the EWC.</p>	<p><b>What you need to do</b></p> <p>Familiarise yourself with the Adoption policy and this support pack.</p> <p>Congratulate the employee.</p> <p>Direct the employee to the policy and support pack for their entitlements.</p> <p>Confirm documentation that needs to be completed.</p> <p>Review the employee's work priorities and identify any pieces of work which cannot be completed before they commence leave.</p> <p>Reallocate or get support to complete pieces of work which cannot be completed before the leave commences.</p>	<p>Employee to upload the required supporting evidence to Workday (e.g. Matching Certificate for UK, Isle of Man and Gibraltar). Retain the original for your own records.</p> <p><b>You will receive a letter detailing your leave and pay entitlements.</b></p>	
<p>Advise your line manager of date, time and frequency of pre and post matching appointments (in the case of surrogacy any ante natal appointments you are attending).</p>	<p>Discuss how you can support your employee's attendance at these appointments.</p>		
<p>Discuss with your line manager how they can support you before, during and after your leave.</p>	<p>Discuss how you can support your employee before, during and after their Adoption Leave.</p> <p>Advise your employee that our Employee Assistance Programme have a number of tools which can support them.</p>		

For employees	For managers	Forms/documentation required	Completed
Complete your performance review paperwork ahead of your review meeting.	Book an appointment about 5 weeks before Adoption Leave is due to start to review their performance and complete the performance review paperwork.	Complete your performance management review.	
Work with your line manager to prepare a handover plan and if appropriate a return to work plan.	Identify resource to cover the absence – if possible have an overlap to support a handover/training.  Work with your employee to prepare a handover plan and if appropriate a return to work plan.		
Ensure you understand the leave process and the impact on pay and benefits as relevant.	Ensure you understand the leave process and the impact on pay and benefits as relevant.		
Nominate a buddy/sponsor to keep up to date with general news about your branch or department.	Agree buddy/sponsor and confirm the job you both see them taking.	Provide your chosen colleague with the Buddy/Sponsor Support Pack (HR > Absence > Adoption Leave).	
Consider whether you would like to receive any regular standard Group communications	Confirm how you will keep in touch with your employee (i.e. booked calls, emails, text etc.).  Identify what kind of information the employee would be interested in receiving e.g. prompts about when to complete forms etc.  There are no rules about how often you should keep in touch with an employee on Adoption Leave – this is very much individual preference and you should work with your employee to agree the best approach		

## Returning to Work

For employees	Forms/documentation required	Completed
Arrange a return to work meeting with your line manager 8 weeks before your expected return to work date.	Make sure Workday is updated with your return to work date and any annual leave you plan to use.	

For employees	Forms/documentation required	Completed
Should you wish to consider options for flexible working, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. There are two options, either an informal route or a formal route. The formal route may take longer to process and you should apply in writing to your line manager in good time prior to your return to work. Submitting an application preferably 8 weeks before you return	Complete the Flexible Working Application Form on the Intranet.  For more information on both options, refer to the Flexible Working Support Pack (HR > Working here > Life balance).	
If you decide not to return to work after your leave, you must provide contractual notice as outlined in your contract of employment.	Make sure Workday is updated with the last date of adoption leave, and any annual leave that is being used prior to your leave date.  Provide confirmation of your resignation in writing to your line manager.	

### 3. Before adoption leave

#### Illness prior to Adoption Leave

If an employee is ill and unable to work, they will be able to take sick leave until the date that has been agreed to begin their Adoption Leave.

#### Performance Review

The performance review process needs to be completed before the employee commences Adoption Leave. We recommend that the process is completed at least 5 weeks before leave is scheduled to commence but this may not always be possible.

#### Pre Adoption Procedural Meetings

Employees involved in Adoption, regardless of hours worked or length of service, are entitled to paid time off for pre- adoption procedural meetings (for surrogacy arrangements – antenatal appointments). Where an employee is adopting a child on their own or has been elected as the “primary adopter” in a joint adoption, they are entitled to take paid time off to attend up to 5 pre-adoption meetings (for surrogacy arrangements – antenatal appointments).

Time off will be paid at the employee’s normal rate of pay. If appointments are arranged during normal working hours, the employee should inform their line manager giving as much notice as possible so that arrangements can be made to cover absence.

If further time off is requested to attend appointments, this may also be paid but is subject to line manager approval. Line managers should consider individual circumstances when considering such requests.

#### Do “secondary adopters” in joint adoptions get time off to attend pre-adoption procedural meetings?

Where the employee is elected as the “secondary adopter” in a joint adoption, they are entitled to paid time off to attend a minimum of 2 pre adoption appointments per adoption (ante-natal appointments per surrogacy arrangement). However, if further time off is requested to attend appointments, this may also be paid but is subject to line manager approval.

Line managers should consider individual circumstances when considering such requests.

The “secondary adopter” should inform their line manager of the dates in question and give as much notice in advance so that their request can be considered and arrangements made to cover their absence if appropriate

## 4. Adoption leave explained

### Am I eligible for Adoption Leave?

Employees are eligible for Adoption Leave provided they are adopting a child (or in the case of surrogacy as long as they are ‘parental order’ parents). In the case of joint adopters only one adopter is entitled to Adoption Leave – the other may be entitled to Parental or Paternity Leave (where leave is being taken for surrogacy arrangements, only one ‘parental order parent’ may take Adoption Leave – the other may be entitled to Parental or Paternity Leave).

Employees will need to decide who will take Adoption Leave.

Adoption Leave will not normally be available in the following situations:

- If a private adoption is arranged
- When employee becomes a special guardian
- When employee adopts a step child.

In these circumstances there may be other forms of leave available. For any further information, please contact HR.

### Taking Leave

The employee taking Adoption Leave is entitled to take up to 42 weeks’ Adoption Leave regardless of how many hours they work or how long they have worked for the Group.

- The first 26 weeks is known as Adoptive Leave (AL)
- The next 16 weeks is known as Additional Adoptive Leave (AAL).

### When can Adoption Leave start?

In adoption cases, the earliest Adoption Leave can start is 28 days before the expected placement of their child, and the latest day it can begin is the day the child is placed. In surrogacy cases, Adoption Leave begins on the date the child is born (or, if the employee is at work on that date, the following day).

An employee may also wish to take annual leave directly prior to the start of their Adoption Leave date, in which case their adoption pay will commence from the agreed Adoption Leave date.

Remember that after the child is placed an employee must be on Adoption Leave rather than on annual leave. Any annual leave that hasn’t been taken would be available at the end of the employee’s Adoption Leave.

In the case of a foreign adoption, some or all of the 16 weeks additional leave may be taken before the date of placement, for the purpose of familiarisation with the child or for the purposes of arranging the placement.

### Notice of intention to take Adoption Leave

The first thing an employee should do is advise their line manager of their intention to adopt. Very little notice is often given for the actual placement of a child and therefore an employee should discuss any potential request for Adoption Leave at the earliest opportunity.

An employee wishing to take Adoption Leave should complete their request on Workday as early as possible and within 7 days of being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child or at least 28 days in advance of when they wish to take Adoption Leave. They will need to know:

- The week of expected placement of their child
- When they intend to start Adoption Leave

You should agree any holidays the employee wants to take immediately prior to Adoption Leave.

### **If you change your mind about when Adoption Leave will start**

You need to notify your line manager and contact HR to confirm the change at least 28 days before you wish to begin your Adoption Leave.

### **If an adoption placement comes to an end during Adoption Leave**

If the placement comes to an end during Adoption Leave then leave can be continued up to 8 weeks after the end of the placement at which time the employee should make arrangements to return to work.

**Emily and her partner are adopting a child. Emily will be taking adoption leave and wants to start planning her leave. What should she consider?**

An employee taking adoption leave is entitled to take up to 42 weeks

The earliest Emily can start her adoption leave is 28 days before the expected placement of her child

The latest date her adoption leave can start is the day the child is placed

Emily should also consider how she wants to use her holidays. Holidays accrue during adoption leave and can be used at the start or end of leave. Emily may want to finish work two weeks before the expected placement date and use a week's holiday before starting adoption leave.

Emily should also consider what leave her partner's intending to take – they may be eligible for Paternity Leave.

Emily needs to complete her leave request on Workday as early as possible and within seven days of being notified by her adoption agency that she has been matched with a child, or at least 28 days in advance of when she wishes to take adoption leave.

Employees will receive a letter detailing their leave and pay within seven days of the request being processed.

## **5. Pay during adoption leave**

Adoption Pay starts when leave begins. Amount paid depends on employees' length of service. The tables below explain the adoption pay an employee will be paid based on their length of service at the qualifying week (the week in which employee is notified of being matched with a child for adoption or the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth in a surrogacy situation).

The guidance uses the following key terms and abbreviations (different terminology applies in surrogacy cases – see below):

**Adoptive Benefit** – weekly payment which is a state benefit paid to you by your local Benefits Agency during adoption leave.

**Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP):** Adoption Leave pay enhanced by the Group for employees of the Group who are eligible. Any enhanced Group payments are always inclusive of Adoptive Benefit.

### **How much adoption pay will be received?**

The table below shows which adoption pay you are likely to be paid based on your length of service at the time you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption.

Length of service	Amount
Less than 26 week's continuous service	<p><b>Week 1 -2</b> 100% of the current salary element Pension funding and benefit funding (where applicable) will continue</p> <p><b>Week 3 - 52</b> No salary, pension funding and if applicable no benefit funding. For further information on the treatment of your pension and benefit elections see part 6 benefits during adoption leave. You should claim Adoptive Benefit six weeks before Adoptive Leave begins. The necessary AB1 form may be obtained from any local office of the Department of Social Welfare, or direct from the Department of Social Protection, McCarter's Road, Ardaraan, Buncrana, Donegal, Ireland.</p>

## Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP)

Here's how OAP is calculated:

Length of service	Amount
26 weeks continuous service	<p>The Group may pay up to a maximum of 27 weeks occupational pay as OAP to an eligible Group employee taking Adoption Leave (subject to eligibility criteria).</p> <p><b>Weeks 1 to 27</b> Full pay less state Adoptive Benefit Pension funding and benefit funding (where applicable) will continue</p> <p><b>Weeks 28 to 42</b> Your salary, pension funding and benefit funding (where applicable) stops You may be eligible for Adoptive Benefit from the Department of Social Protection</p>

## How are payments for Adoption Leave paid?

- OAP is calculated on a weekly basis, paid on the normal salary date and will start on a Sunday
- Adoption pay is only paid in completed weeks; however it is paid on the number of calendar days in the month. Therefore payments can differ on a month to month basis, depending on the number of calendar days in the month.
- When you are paid on the 18th that your salary covers two weeks in arrears and two weeks in advance e.g. pay received on 18th January is for 1st – 31st January

## What happens if you receive a pay rise before their Adoption Leave?

- Any pay rise will be taken into account and reflected in the employee's adoption pay.
- If employee is eligible for OAP this will be based on their most up to date salary at the time of leave.

## What happens if you receive a pay rise during Adoption Leave?

Any payrise made while you are on Adoptive Leave will be taken into account and reflected in your Adoption pay.



## How to access payslips whilst on Adoption Leave?

Payslips are sent to employee whilst on Adoption Leave – they are also available online.

## What happens if you get less than the standard rate of adoption benefit?

You should advise HR People Services of the rate of adoption benefit to be paid, along with a copy of the confirmation received. HR People Services will then change the deduction of Adoption Benefit from your Occupational Adoption Pay with the amount you are to be paid.

# 6. During Adoption Leave

## Keeping in touch

- It's important to remember that an employee is still very much one of the team whilst they are on leave. Line managers need to agree the level of contact that they have with the employee and this will vary from person to person
- The role of the Buddy/Sponsor is to make sure that the employee is kept up to date about any major developments in the branch or department, and the team
- Line managers may also agree to regular calls, e-mails, texts etc. with the employee
- If you're an employee going on adoption leave, remember that your colleagues will be eager to hear your news. Keeping in touch with other members of the team also helps you to adjust back into working life at the end of the leave. Your line manager will also be keen to hear how you are getting on and about your plans for returning to work
- Line managers will keep employees on leave informed of any re-organisation or changes in structure to the area. If there are changes while an employee is away, they'll be sent all the communications and will be treated as if they're still working.

## Buddy/Sponsor role

In order to keep up to date with news about your branch, business unit or division while you are on leave, you should nominate a buddy/sponsor who can do this while you are away from work.

You may wish to ask your line manager or one of your colleagues to act as your buddy/sponsor. There is a Support Pack designed to assist your buddy/sponsor (HR > Absence > Adoption Leave). It is recommended that you give this to them.

# 7. Benefits during adoption leave

## Pension and Benefit Funding

Your Pension Funding and any Benefit Funding you get in Value Account will be paid to you whilst your paid OAP. Once OAP is no longer paid your Pension and Benefit Funding will stop too.

## RBSelect during Adoption Leave

- All RBSelect benefits will continue during Adoption Leave or 12 months, whichever is the shortest
- During Adoption Leave, you can reduce or cancel many of your elections via RBSelect Anytime

## RBSelect charges

If you're receiving OAP:

- We'll continue to pay your Pension Funding and any Benefit Funding you get in addition to your OAP

- The charge for your RBSelect benefits will be made against your pay
- If you don't receive enough pay to cover the cost of your RBSelect charges the Group will pay the shortfall

#### **If you're receiving SAP or no pay:**

- If you don't receive other elements of pay but receive SAP, the Group will fund your RBSelect benefit charges
- We'll not pass any charges against your statutory pay

#### **If you're not eligible for OAP:**

- The Group will fund the charge for your RBSelect benefits.

You'll need to pay any tax due to RBSelect benefits you get while you're on Adoption Leave, even though you may not be charged for them.

### **RBSelect - Annual Election Window**

If you're about to go or are on Adoption Leave during the RBSelect Annual Election Window (AEW) you'll not be able to make new or increased elections. But, you'll be able to change some of your elections when you return and you'll be able to participate in the next AEW as usual.

### **RBSelect - Returning to work**

HR People Services will send you a return to work letter prompting you to review, and if necessary, change some of your elections within specified timescales. You'll receive an online confirmation statement confirming any changes you've made.

### **Private Medical Cover**

If you want to add your child to your cover, this should be done 30 days from the birth/placement or you'll need to wait until the next Annual Election Window. You can do this by asking your manager to raise a case via Contact HR on the HR homepage. Your Private Medical Cover will continue whilst you're on Adoption Leave.

If you have any questions or changes required for Vhi during your leave you should contact them directly to discuss. Contact Vhi healthcare on 1850 44 44 44 or online at <http://www.vhi.ie/>

### **Defined Benefit Pension Plan & Retirement Savings Plan**

If you're in the DB Pension Plan or making contributions to the Retirement savings plan, your membership will be unaffected during Adoption Leave and, unless you elect otherwise your contributions will continue.

### **Job Need Cars**

You can keep your car and continue to pay the benefit in kind tax liability but if you want to return it you should contact Merrion Fleet Management Ltd on 0044 0353 1206 1118 to arrange collection.

### **Banking Benefits**

All banking benefits continue during your leave. Any borrowing on special staff terms will continue, such as mortgage, personal loans and overdrafts. It's not possible to freeze any payments to loans or mortgages. If you're experiencing financial difficulty please speak to your local branch.

### **Taxsaver Commuter Tickets**

- You'll continue to pay for your ticket while you're on leave and receiving pay. If you enter into a period of unpaid leave any outstanding amount will be deducted from your final salary payment.
- If you want to, you can also cancel your ticket.

## Cancelling or Amending Annual Tickets

If you need to cancel your ticket you'll need to:

Return your ticket with the Refund Form by the 14th of the month directly to the following address: Property Services, Tax saver Commuter Tickets, Ground Floor, Dublin Mortgage Centre, Leopardstown, Dublin 18, Depot code: 035. Phone 00353 1 709 2000

Purchasing and Property Operations will in turn contact Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann or Bus Éireann to work out the appropriate refund due to you if applicable.

If you want to work out the value of the refund please refer to the Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann or Bus Éireann websites for more details on when refunds are applicable.

## Holidays

- You'll continue to build up contractual and Bank holiday entitlement for the current holiday year (and the previous holiday year if your leave started in the previous holiday year)
- You can take all or part of your holiday entitlement before your leave starts or take them immediately following the end of Adoption Leave
- Alternatively, you may want to end your leave early and take all or part of your holiday entitlement before returning to work. You should discuss and agree holiday arrangements with your line manager before Adoption Leave starts
- Any holiday not taken before Adoption Leave starts will carry forward to the next leave year if appropriate.
- There's no limit on the days you can carry forward but once Adoption Leave is completed, if any leave (including carried forward leave) is not taken, only 5 days may then be carried forward.

## Bonus

- Where appropriate, performance for the year should be reviewed before you go on leave
- As long as you've not resigned before the date of the grant, you'll be told of any bonus due as soon as its known
- If you're eligible for a discretionary performance bonus (subject to the qualifying criteria) you'll receive a pro-rated bonus to reflect the period worked during the relevant performance year. Your line manager will explain how the performance rating and the pro-rating of any bonus payment will operate.
- Where eligible, the bonus will be paid regardless of whether you're receiving Adoption leave payments at that time
- Any bonus will be paid on the defined payment date.

## Sharesave

### Existing plans

Subject to the rules of the plan, during leave you can:

- Continue to make monthly contributions to any existing Sharesave contracts by payroll deduction; or
- If you're not receiving pay, you'll need to contact Computershare to continue to make monthly contributions to any existing Sharesave contracts by an alternative method – you should contact Computershare on 0870 702 0109 if you want to set this up
- Take up any new Sharesave offers (subject to terms applying) Choose to take a twelve-month payment holiday by contacting Computershare on the number above. If you choose to do this, you'll need to inform HR via an online "Sharesave Payment Suspension" form. This is available at HR > Pensions and benefits > benefits > shares > share save

Note: Suspending contributions will delay when the savings plan finishes, as you'll need to catch up on the missed payments. If you miss more than twelve payments, your right to buy shares will lapse.

If you want to reinstate payment through your salary, you should contact Computershare one month before you want the payments through payroll to re-start. Computershare will then pass this information onto HR People Services.

Further information regarding Sharesave can be found on the Intranet under HR > Pensions and benefits > Shares.

### **New plans**

- All Sharesave grants are subject to approval by the Board and there is no guarantee that Sharesave will operate in any given year
- Once details of a Sharesave grant are announced, your sponsor or line manager should send a copy of any related correspondence and an application pack to you at your home address.

## **What happens to benefits if the employee chooses not to return?**

You'll be treated as a leaver from the Group. Most benefits will stop from the day you leave or the end of the month in which you leave. Full details can be found in the Leavers Benefit Guide.

## **8. Returning to work after adoption leave**

### **How much notice do you need to give when returning from Adoption Leave?**

You should provide at least 28 days written notice of your intention to return to work.

### **When an employee is returning to work, their line manager is responsible for:**

- Accommodating returners to their old job, or where this is not reasonably practicable, to an alternative job of equivalent or greater pay or status at the same work location or within reasonable travelling distance of the employee's existing workplace
- Giving serious consideration to flexible working requests from returners
- Discussing with their employee how they can support them after their leave and in their transition back to work
- Ensuring that phase back is discussed with their employee and a full plan is agreed before they start their return to work.

### **Return to work meeting**

A return to work meeting between you and your line manager should be held 8 weeks before you're due to return to work. At the meeting the following should be discussed:

- The date you're proposing to return to work including holiday and phase back dates
- Any arrangements to make the return to work as smooth as possible
- Any training, support or development requirements to support your return to work
- If you're making a flexible working request, discuss hours and pattern and how this would fit with the business
- Adoption Phase back arrangements

### **What happens when the employee returns to work?**

On your first day back in the office, your line manager will bring you up to date on anything that affects you. Depending on the discussion before your return, your line manager may have put a training programme in place.

This training will be informal and will vary from job to job. It will also depend on the length of time you've been on leave. It may include meeting with other team members, getting to know new products and talking about the branch or departments progress against targets and budget.

## The return to work process

Once the Return to work discussion has been completed line managers must:

- Start the return to work process in Workday
- A line manager can also update any details for their employee from the agreed start date
- Follow the flexible working application process if required for flexible working arrangements. Any change in hours will need to be requested on Workday through Employee > Actions > Job Change > Change Job
- If appropriate follow the resignation process

There are a number of points to consider when an employee returns to work (remember to make arrangements in good time) these include:

- Desk, PC and telephone
- E-mail accounts and systems access
- Car parking
- Refresher training
- Team meetings and social events
- Holidays

If you've been unable to use your outstanding holiday entitlement before you return for any reason, you can carry up to five days holiday forward for use in the next calendar year. In exceptional circumstances, you may carry forward more than five days holiday if agreed by your line manager.

It's always useful for a line manager to set some time aside on their employees first day and ask other team members to update them on any news.

If for medical reasons, you're unable to return to work on the day you planned you must follow the normal sickness absence procedures as outlined in the Sickness Absence Support Pack (HR > Absence > Sickness Absence).

Meera is returning to work after adoption leave. What should she and her manager consider?

Meera and her manager should arrange a meeting 8 weeks before she's due to return to work. Depending on childcare and travel, they could have a call rather than meet. It's important to have the meeting early so that everything is organised for returning to work. The key points to discuss at the meeting include:

Meera should let her manager know what date she's planning to return to work.

If Meera has any outstanding holidays, she needs to confirm if these will all be taken at the end of her adoption leave. If not, up to 5 days pro-rata can be carried forward into the next holiday year with her manager's agreement.

She should let her manager know if she would like phase back. The meeting's a good opportunity to discuss phase back and agree arrangements. There's more information in the Phase Back section.

If Meera wants to make a flexible working request, she should let her manager know. There's information on the process in the Flexible Working Support Pack.

Meera and her manager should discuss any training or updates that need to be arranged for her return to work. Any other support that would help Meera's return to work. There's more information on support under Part 9, support for working parents.

After the meeting, Meera's manager needs to update Workday. It's important this form is completed so the employee is paid correctly. Meera's manager also needs to complete the actions on the Administration Checklist which includes reactivating systems access and e-mail which will help make her return to work smoother.

## Phase back

Following a long period of leave, it can be hard coming back to work, and this can be helped by phasing back. You're entitled to 12 weeks phase back; working agreed reduced hours over a set period and you'll receive full pay and benefits. Phase back to work can't exceed the 12 weeks and there's no set programme of return as each request needs to be considered on an individual basis. However, a line manager must make sure that all requests are treated with consistency. A phase back might involve a buildup of hours each day or the number of days in a week. Where you're phasing back to a part-time work pattern it's likely you'll do this sooner than someone phasing back to full-time. During a phase back period performance objectives should be based on actual working hours.

Two examples are set out below:

### Example 1 – Return to full time hours

If an employee takes their full phase back entitlement of 12 weeks they might work the first 3 weeks as 1 day a week, weeks 4 - 6 as 2 days a week, weeks 7 - 9 as 3 days a week and weeks 10 and 12 as 4 days a week before returning full time. Pay and benefits will be paid for their full contractual hours, not just the hours worked.

### Example 2 – Return to part time hours e.g. 20 hours per week

If an employee takes their full phase back entitlement of 12 weeks they might work the first 4 weeks as 1 day a week for 5 hours, weeks 5-8 as 2 days a week for 5 hours, weeks 9 - 12 as 3 days a week for 5 hours before returning to 20 hours per week. Pay and benefits will be paid for their full contractual hours, not just the hours worked.

## What if the employee is reducing their hours when they return from Adoption Leave?

If you're reducing your hours, a change in hours request will be required by your line manager.

**Example** An employee works 5 days per week, 35 hours, prior to going on adoption leave. The employee then takes 9 months adoption leave, followed by 25 days holiday. The Line Manager must update Workday with the date they are ending adoption leave and commencing holidays to ensure the employee is returned to payroll. During this time, the employee and line manager agree the employee will return 3 days per week, 21 hours. Following the holidays, a change in hours needs to be submitted via Employee > Actions > Job Change > Change Job on Workday. The employee will then start their phase back, building up to 21 hours per week.

## What if there is no job to return to?

This may arise as a result of a restructure. If you're on Adoption Leave, you'll be included in the consultation process. Where possible, you'll be told of the business change at the same time as others in your team, but this will depend on your personal circumstances. This will be done face to face where possible, and may involve a manager visiting your home or in a mutually convenient place. If you can't attend in person, you'll need to tell your manager how to contact you.

## What if the employee can't return to work?

If for medical reasons, you're unable to return to work on the day planned, you need to follow the normal sickness absence procedures as outlined in the Sickness Absence Support Pack. Your line manager will return you to work and then start the sickness absence process in Workday.

## What if childcare problems arise?

No matter how well organised you are, you may well encounter childcare problems. Your child or carer could fall sick, or childcare arrangements could simply fall through. If you have such problems, you may be entitled to Special Leave. The Leave Support Pack provides further details.

If a child has a prolonged illness, the employee should discuss with their line manager the possibility of taking some unpaid Parental Leave or reorganising their work to allow them to make some other arrangements. Please see the Parental Leave Policy and Holiday & Other Leave Support Pack for more information (HR > Absence).

## What if the employee doesn't want to return to work?

If an employee decides not to return to work they need to give the Group proper contractual notice by writing to their line manager. The line manager will need to return them to work from Adoption leave and start the resignation process in Workday.

Line managers must then update Workday to start the resignation process (Employee > Actions > Job Change > Terminate Employee).

Further information on what happens to pay and benefits if you resign is detailed in the Resignation section on the HR pages (HR > Working here > Leaving the bank).

# 9. Supporting working parents

At the Group, we understand the challenges that parents face on returning to work after a period of Adoption leave and are committed to making the return as easy as possible for both yourself and your new child. We offer a number of policies and products which provide support for working parents.

The decision about returning to work will be influenced by a whole range of factors, such as family commitments, career, income and the hours you'd like to work. You should think these things through before the return to work discussion with your line manager. Some of the support available is outlined below.

## Childcare

Childcare is one of the most important matters to consider when deciding about returning to work. Everyone's circumstances are unique. You should start looking at childcare options early on as places may be scarce and some nurseries allocate places far in advance.

Our Employee Assistance Programme offers advice, information and support on a wide range of issues, including childcare and parenting.

## Parental Leave

You'll usually need at least one year's continuous employment with the Group to be entitled to unpaid Parental Leave. However, if you have more than three months' continuous service, and the child is approaching 18, you can take one week's leave for every full month of continuous employment with the Group.

You can take up to 26 weeks leave in total until your child's 18th birthday, which you can choose to take as a continuous block of 26 weeks. However, if you qualify for Parental Leave for more than one child, you can't take more than 26 weeks' Parental Leave in any 12-month period.

In the case of children in receipt of disability living allowance, there's more flexibility when Parental Leave can be taken - this can be one day at a time or in longer periods if you wish.

You may be able to add Parental Leave to the end of Adoption and should you provide your line manager with three weeks' notice.

## Parent's Leave

Parents Leave is specifically for parents during the child's first 2 years.

You can take 7 weeks leave during your child's first 2 years (or for children who are adopted, within 2 years of the placement of the child). This leave is unpaid however you're able to claim Parents Benefit from the government.

Parents leave increased from 5 weeks to 7 weeks on 1 July 2022. If you've already taken 5 weeks of Parent's Leave you can claim the additional 2 weeks if your child was under 2 on 1 July 2022 or your adopted child was placed with you less than two years on 1 July 2022.

Parent's Leave must be taken in minimum 1-week blocks prior to your child's second birthday, or in the case of adoption within two years of the child being placed with the family. Requests for Parent's Leave should be submitted on Workday at least 6 weeks before the requested start date. Line Managers may ask to postpone Parent's Leave for up to 12 weeks if it can't be accommodated, for example because there are too many others in the team on leave or it is a peak time.

## Flexible working

You have the right to apply to work flexibly and this request will be considered by your line manager. The Group has a range of different working practices detailed in the Flexible Working Support Pack. Alternatively, you can contact HR or speak to your line manager. The support pack gives guidance on the flexible working application process.

## Employment breaks

The Group offers unpaid employment breaks to allow you time away from work to focus on other things in your life. You can request a break of between 8 and 52 weeks to focus on personal interests. Further details can be found in the Holiday and Other Leave Support Pack.

## Special Leave

We understand that sometimes things happen in life out with your control. To support you during these times you can take reasonable time off work, paid or unpaid, to deal with emergencies, for example those involving a dependent. For further information, you should speak to your line manager and review the Holiday and Other Leave Support Pack.

## Employee Assistance Programme

The arrival of a child is one of life's most exciting experiences. It can also be daunting and overwhelming at times. Our Employee Assistance Programme can help you on the journey to parenthood, from telling a line manager to returning to work and parenting a growing child. It's a free and confidential service available to you and your immediate family members. You can call to speak with a consultant or visit online or through the app for comprehensive information, practical advice and emotional support.

Telephone	1800 938 707
Online	Employee Assistance Programme go to HR Information>Wellbeing External access: <a href="http://www.guidanceresources.com">www.guidanceresources.com</a> Web ID: NATWEST Change the flag icon to choose your location
App	Providing 24/7 access to support and information. Search for "GuidanceResources" in your app store to install the mobile app. Web ID: NATWEST



