**SPL - FAQ**

*Can both parents take shared parental leave at the same time?*

Yes, parents can choose to take this together or individually as long as the collective leave is 50 weeks or less.

*When will the mother of a child be eligible to take SPL?*

The mother can opt to take SPL after the mandatory 2 weeks maternity leave

*How many blocks of leave can be taken?*

There is no limit on the blocks within the 50 weeks available SPL. Employees can make three separate requests for SPL.

*How can I cover the individual’s work during their leave?*

You could look to redistribute work within the team, or recruit for the relevant period. This could be in the form of a fixed term appointment of an internal secondment. If you wish to recruit, follow the normal process for seeking approval.

*Can a request for shared parental leave be refused?*

Requests for **discontinuous** leave can be declined. Staff then have the option to withdraw their notification on or before the 15th day after they made the notification and it will not count as one of the three notifications. They will then have to take their leave in one continuous block.

Requests for **continuous** leave cannot be refused.

*Can a member of staff change their mind about the leave that they want to take?*

Yes, they can request to vary or cancel Shared Parental Leave, giving eight weeks' notice.

*Can both parents take shared parental leave at the same time?*

Yes, parents can choose to take this together or individually as long as the collective leave is 50 weeks or less

*Can SPL be taken for a few days at a time?*

No, it cannot be taken for less than one week at a time and it must be taken in multiples of a week, though it may start mid-week.  For example, a member of staff cannot take one week and 3 days. They could work some SPLIT days on one of the other days if you agree.

*What job is the individual entitled to return to after shared parental leave?*

If a member of staff returns after a period of leave (whether maternity, paternity, adoption or SPL) of up to 26 weeks they are entitled to return to the same job. Up to 4 weeks unpaid parental leave is not taken into account.

If they return after more than 26 weeks of  leave (whether maternity, paternity, adoption or SPL) they are entitled to return to the same job unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case they must be offered a suitable and appropriate job on equivalent terms and condition.

*How much is Shared Parental Pay?*

Shard Parental Pay is the same as the flat rate for statutory maternity pay and maternity allowance. This is reviewed by the Government annually.

*How far in advance does the member of staff have to provide dates of SPL?*

After the member of staff has given a notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL, written notice should be given at least 8 weeks before they want to start SPL.  The notice must set out the start and end date of SPL, whether it is taken in one continuous period or separate blocks.

*Can staff on shared parental leave take keeping-in-touch days?*

Yes they are called Shared Parental Leave in Touch days (SPLiTs) and each parent can take up to 20 SPLiT days.

*What happens to annual leave during SPL?*

Annual leave continues to accrue during SPL.

*What happens in the event of a multiple birth?*

The regulations and process are unchanged.

*What happens if the member of staff has agreed a date to begin SPL but the baby arrives early?*

If the child is born before their expected due date and the employee had booked to take SPL within the first eight weeks of the due date, they may take the same period of time off after the actual birth without having to provide eight weeks’ notice, by submitting a notice to vary their leave as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Any leave arranged after the first eight weeks of the due date is still bound by the eight-week notice required to vary leave.

If the child is born more than eight weeks before the due date and the notice of entitlement to SPL and/or a notice to book SPL have not yet been given, then there is no requirement to give eight weeks’ notice before

the period of leave starts. The notices should be given as soon as is reasonably practicable after the actual birth.

*Can I keep in contact with a member of staff while they are taking SPL?*

Yes. It is always a good idea to keep in touch to keep the individual informed of any changes in the workplace. It is recommended that you discuss with them prior to the leave commencing the best way to do this and agree method and frequency.