**Foster to Adopt**

Foster to Adopt involves placing young babies with potential adopters who are also approved as temporary foster carers, while decisions are made about the child’s future within the court process.

While the court makes decisions about the child’s future, Foster to Adopt carers must be willing to invest in the short and long term needs of the child with an understanding that if the child cannot return home, they will adopt them.  A child may be returned to their birth parents or another member of the birth family if the court decides this is best for the child.

During the fostering period, the foster carer will need to attend regular meetings and facilitate contact with birth family.

The government made changes to adoption leave and pay in April 2015, recognising Foster to Adopt in these changes and allowing Foster to Adopt carers to take adoption leave and pay (if they meet the usual eligibility criteria) from the point a child is placed with them.

Our Adoption Leave Policy and Procedure sets out the eligibility criteria for adoption leave and pay in detail.

Foster to Adopt is separate from traditional fostering (whether short or long term) where there is no intention that the child will be permanently adopted. There is no right to leave or pay in these circumstances.

In the event that the adoption does not go ahead after the fostering placement, the entitlement for adoption leave and pay will end eight weeks after the child is removed from the adopter or at the end of the adoption leave, whichever is earlier.

Only one period of adoption leave and pay is provided. For example, where adoption leave and pay is taken at the point the child is placed with the member of staff for fostering, there is no right to additional leave and pay at the point the adoption is confirmed.

Managers should note:

* Traditional adoption can take many months and as such you are likely to have notification well in advance of potential adoption leave. Fostering to Adopt placements in contrast can happen very quickly.
* In the event that a child placed under the Foster to Adopt scheme is returned to the birth family, this is likely to be a stressful and emotional experience for a member of staff. They may choose to return to work as soon as possible, or they may want to take some leave in order to adjust. In such circumstances it is important to have open dialogue and be as flexible as possible.
* Staff on adoption leave are also entitled to Keeping in Touch Days (see the Policy and Procedure for more information).
* Staff who are fostering to adopt may also be entitled to Shared Parental Leave Paternity Leave. More information is available in our Shared Parental Leave Policy and Procedure and Paternity Leave Policy and Procedure.
* Staff should still complete the Adoption Leave Forms available on StaffNet [here](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=9410). They should also provide copies of any relevant paperwork from the local authority that comes details of the placement.
* Managers should ensure that they complete the relevant sections of the forms, including the checklist.