**Family Leave**

The purpose of these notes is to provide managers with guidance on dealing with and supporting members of staff taking family leave in the event of the birth of a baby, adoption of a child or to provide care for a child.

These notes encompass our policies on Maternity, Adoption, Parental, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave, and should be read alongside those documents.

**Principles**

Employers that follow good practice with all forms of family leave can improve the experience of parents and new parents, encourage them to return to work therefore retaining experience and knowledge, and increase the likelihood of achieving a diverse workforce.

Approximately 80% of the workforce are parents. The University strongly supports parents in achieving a balance between their family and their work, and wish to take a flexible and supportive approach to family leave for all parents.

**Relevant Legislation**

The University is required to comply with all the legal requirements surrounding family leave. These are set out in the respective policies, but there are some key similarities:

* Members of staff are protected from detriment or less favourable treatment due to the fact that they are taking any form of family leave.
* Members of staff have a range of statutory rights concerning time off and benefits. These are set out in our policies. The legislation provides minimum rights. In many cases, the University has chosen to provide benefits in excess of those we are required to do by law.
* Members of staff have the right to return to the same job following a period of family leave (or in some circumstances, a role with on no less favourable terms and conditions).

**Manager Responsibilities**

An open and supportive relationship between the manager and individual taking family leave is of key importance during this time. The University makes the following recommendations:

**Before Leave**

* Ensure that the member of staff is aware of the relevant policy, available on the StaffNet, and their entitlements under these policies. Questions can be directed to HR.
* Conduct a risk assessment where applicable.
* Discuss with the member of staff how they would like their leave communicated (for example, would they like to tell colleagues themselves).
* Discuss with the member of staff any particular needs or support required prior to the leave commencing.
* Ensure that the member of staff has submitted any relevant paperwork, such as a MATB1 form or Matching Certificate.
* Discuss and agree plans for cover, where applicable.
* Discuss and agree the level and method of contact during the leave period.
* Discuss and agree how and when they employee wishes to take holiday entitlement, for example, immediately before and after the leave period.

**During Leave**

* Maintain contact as agreed.
* Facilitate the applicable methods for keeping in touch, e.g. KIT days, and ensure that they are used effectively.
* Discuss and agree plans for return to work at the appropriate time, including identifying any potential training requirements to refresh skills.
* Manage any flexible working requests that are made.

**Returning from leave**

* Facilitate an appropriate handover of work to the returning member of staff.
* Notify colleagues of their forthcoming return. .
* Provide any necessary updates to ensure that the individual is fully briefed on any changes that took place in their absence.
* Keep in regular contact during the early days and weeks to discuss with them how their return to work is going and ensuring any necessary support is put in place.

See also our specific guidance and training for supporting employees taking and returning from maternity leave.