

## Neonatal Care Leave Policy

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### 1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 This policy has been developed to support you if your newborn baby requires neonatal care following birth, ensuring you can extend your time off with your child, with pay.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to inform you of your right to request Neonatal Care Leave (NCL), your pay entitlement during NCL, and to signpost internal and external support available if your child requires neonatal care.
- 1.3 NCL entitles parents to a **maximum** of 12 weeks of leave if their child requires neonatal care within the first 28 days following birth for a minimum of 7 consecutive days.
- 1.4 This policy is non-contractual and can be amended at any time.

### 2. Scope and definitions

- 2.1 If your child is born on or after 6 April 2025, all University employees are eligible for NCL from their first day of employment, provided that at the time of the child's birth:
  - You are the child's parent and have responsibility for their upbringing, or
  - You are the child's adopter (or prospective adopter in a "foster to adopt" arrangement) and have or expect to have responsibility for their upbringing, or
  - You are having a child through surrogacy, intend to apply for a parental order within six months of the child's birth, and have responsibility for their upbringing, or
  - You are the partner living with the child's birth parent, primary adopter, or prospective adopter, and have main responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- 2.2 The entitlement for pay during NCL is confirmed in Sections 3 and 5.

**Definitions:**

2.3 **Neonatal Care:** The word 'Neonatal' means newborn, or the first 28 days of life. For this policy, **Neonatal Care** includes:

- any medical care received in a hospital;
- medical care received elsewhere following discharge from hospital. Such care must be under the direction of a consultant and includes ongoing monitoring and visits to the child by healthcare professionals; or
- palliative or end of life care.

**3. General Principles of NCL**

3.1 You are entitled to a period of leave equivalent to the number of complete weeks your child spends in neonatal care, provided it has been for at least 7 consecutive days, up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

3.2 NCL will be paid in full if you meet the qualifying criteria outlined in Section 5. If you do not meet the criteria, you can still take NCL, but the period of leave will be unpaid.

3.3 The qualifying period of 7 days begins with the day **after** your baby first receives neonatal care (i.e. days 2-8 of neonatal care). NCL can be taken from the day after this qualifying period (i.e day 9 of neonatal care) and **within 68 weeks** of your child's birth, allowing you to take your NCL entitlement in addition to other types of parental leave (including maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental, and parental bereavement leave). Section 4 provides further details on how NCL can be taken alongside these types of family leave.

3.4 NCL is structured into two tiers to provide flexibility and support during this critical period:

- **Tier 1 Leave:** This can be taken while your child is in neonatal care or within the first week after discharge. During this time, NCL can be taken in **individual week-long blocks** with **short notice**.
- **Tier 2 Leave:** This is available once your child has left neonatal care and must be taken in **one continuous block** at any time from your child's discharge up to **68 weeks after birth**.

3.5 You can only take up to a maximum of 12 weeks NCL, even if multiple children from the same pregnancy require neonatal care.

## 4. Taking NCL

### 4.1. Maternity and Adoption Leave

4.1.1 If you are the mother/birth parent, intended parent, or primary carer (and taking a period of maternity or adoption leave), NCL can be taken after your maternity/adoption leave has ended or curtailed (if moving onto Shared Parental Leave).

4.1.2 You can choose to take NCL immediately after maternity/adoption leave (before you return to work) or at a different time after maternity/adoption leave has ended, but **no later than 68 weeks** after the child's date of birth or placement.

4.1.3 As per 3.4, if your child continues to receive neonatal care after your maternity/adoption leave, you can take NCL in individual weeks until 68 weeks after their date of birth or placement. However, if your child has been discharged from neonatal care, any NCL must be taken in a single continuous block until 68 weeks after their date of birth or placement.

### 4.2: Paternity, Shared Parental, and Parental Bereavement Leave:

4.2.1 If you are taking a period of paternity leave, NCL can be taken before or after this leave; however, it should be noted that paternity leave must be taken no later than your child's first birthday. It is recommended, therefore, that paternity leave be taken in the first instance.

4.2.2 If you are taking a period of Shared Parental Leave, NCL can be taken before, during (as you can pause, and restart shared parental leave providing leave is taken within 1 year of your child's birth), or after this leave, but no later than 68 weeks after your child's date of birth.

4.2.3 If you have taken a period of parental bereavement leave and are eligible for NCL, you can add this leave to the end of your period of parental bereavement leave. If you have suffered a bereavement, please contact a member of the People Directorate so that we can discuss other support that we may be able to offer.

## 5. Neonatal Leave Pay

5.1 You will continue to receive your normal rate of pay during NCL if you meet the following criteria:

- You have completed at least 26 weeks of continuous service with the University by the “relevant week”:
  - Birth parents/Intended Parents: the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.
  - Adoptive parents: the week in which you are matched with your child.
  - Other cases: the week before neonatal care begins.
- Your average weekly earnings meet or exceed the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
- You have informed your Line Manager and submitted the Neonatal Leave Notification Form as per Section 6.

## 6. Notification to take Neonatal Care Leave

### 6.1 Notice during the tier 1 period

6.1.1 For each week of NCL you wish to take during tier 1, you should notify your line manager by telephone or email, preferably before your first day of absence in that week. However, we understand that this is likely to be a challenging time for you, so please give notice as soon as reasonably practicable for you to do so.

6.1.2 Once you have informed your Line Manager, please confirm your intention to take NCL by completing the Neonatal Leave Notification Form via MyView. We request that the form be completed as soon as it is reasonably practicable and ideally before your period NCL commences. **Your Line Manager can complete this notification form on your behalf if more convenient.**

### 6.2 Notice during the tier 2 period

6.2.1 If you wish to take NCL during the Tier 2 period, you must inform your Line Manager of your intention and entitlement as soon as possible. Ideally, please provide at least 15 days' notice for one week of NCL or a minimum of 28 days' notice before the first day of NCL for longer periods. If this is not possible, please give notice as soon as reasonably practicable.

6.2.2 Once you have informed your Line Manager, please confirm your intention to take NCL by completing the Neonatal Leave Notification Form via MyView. **Your Line Manager can complete this notification form on your behalf if more convenient.**

## 7 . Support

7.1 The University understands your child or children may have ongoing medical needs requiring regular hospital appointments and check-ups when you return to work. Please refer to our [Special Leave Policy](#) for further information and support regarding further time off that you may require.

7.2 Further internal and external support information can be found in Appendix A.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Neonatal Care Leave and Pay Policy
Lead contact email	<a href="mailto:Brooke.Foulger@manchester.ac.uk">Brooke.Foulger@manchester.ac.uk</a>
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Supersedes:	N.A – New Policy
Previous review dates:	N.A – New Policy
Next review date:	2027
Equality impact outcome:	Low
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	<b>N.A</b>
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc	Maternity Policy Adoption Policy Paternity Policy Shared Parental Leave Policy Special Leave Policy Flexible Working Policy Neo Natal Leave FAQ'S
Policy owner:	People Directorate
Lead contact:	Brooke Foulger

**Appendix A:  
Neonatal Care Leave Policy  
External Support**

**Sensitive Content:**

We know that some parents visiting this section may have a baby in neonatal care or have experienced loss. This page provides information about external and internal support that may help during this difficult time.

**General Support & Advice:**

**BLISS UK**: BLISS is a leading UK charity for babies born premature or sick and it supports families with a baby in neonatal care.

**EiSmart**: Ei Smart is a voluntary group of passionate clinicians, academics and parents working together to offer support for infants with developmental challenges from birth onwards.

**MIND UK**: Provides supportive information.

**North West Neo Natal Operational Delivery Network**: The NWNODN works in partnership with families and healthcare professionals delivering neonatal care across the North West.

**Rainbow Trust**: Rainbow Trust is a leading organisation providing practical and emotional support to families with a seriously ill child including children in NICU.

**Spoons: Peer Support**: Peer support group for families

**Unicef Neonatal Leaflet**: Unicef Neonatal Information

**Support for parents affected by the loss of a baby:**

**Sands UK**: Sands works to support anyone affected by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby.

**Together for Short Lives**: Together for Short Lives is the UK's leading charity for Children's Palliative Care.

**4Louis UK**: 4Louis is a UK charity that works across the country to support anyone affected by miscarriage, stillbirth and the death of a baby or child.

**Internal Support:**

**Employee Assistance Programme**

**Counselling Service**

**Employee Wellbeing**

**Parents and Carers Information**