

Viamed Company Personnel
CPM 06 Absence Parental Leave and Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

Effective date: 27 July 2026

Review frequency: Annual, or following a relevant legislative change

For maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, Shared Parental Leave or parental bereavement leave, employees should refer to the relevant Company Personnel Manual policy available through Intrastats.

This policy covers:

- statutory unpaid parental leave; and
- statutory Neonatal Care Leave and Statutory Neonatal Care Pay.

These are separate statutory entitlements and may be available in addition to other forms of family leave.

Part A — Unpaid Parental Leave

1. Purpose

Unpaid parental leave allows eligible employees to take time away from work to care for, or support the welfare of, a child.

Examples may include:

- spending more time with a child;
- helping a child settle into a new school or childcare arrangement;
- accompanying or supporting a child during a significant change;
- spending time with family;
- caring for a child during a period when other leave is not available.

Unpaid parental leave is separate from Shared Parental Leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave and time off for dependants.

2. Day-one entitlement

From **6 April 2026**, eligible employees may give notice to take unpaid parental leave from their first day of employment. There is no minimum continuous-service requirement.

The entitlement applies to employees. It does not normally apply to:

- self-employed people;
- agency workers;
- contractors; or
- other individuals who are not legally classed as employees.

3. Eligibility

An employee may qualify for unpaid parental leave where:

- they are named on the child's birth or adoption certificate; or
- they have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child;
- they are not a foster parent, unless they have obtained parental responsibility through the courts;
- the child is under 18 years of age; and
- the leave is being taken for the purpose of caring for the child or supporting the child's welfare.

The company may request reasonable evidence of entitlement, such as a birth certificate, adoption documentation or evidence of parental responsibility. The company will not normally request the same evidence each time leave is requested.

Evidence should be supplied to the Human Resources Controller.

4. Amount of unpaid parental leave

An eligible employee may take up to **18 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child**, up to the child's 18th birthday.

The entitlement relates to the child rather than to the employee's current employment. Any parental leave already taken for the same child while working for another employer counts towards the total 18-week entitlement.

Unless the company agrees otherwise:

- an employee may take up to four weeks' parental leave for each child in any 12-month period;
- leave must normally be taken in whole weeks; and
- leave does not have to be taken all at once.

Where the child is disabled, parental leave may be taken in individual days or shorter periods where permitted by law.

A week is based on the employee's normal working pattern.

For example:

- where an employee normally works five days each week, one week of parental leave is five working days;
- where an employee normally works three days each week, one week of parental leave is three working days;
- for irregular working patterns, a week will be calculated using the employee's normal annual working days divided by 52.

5. Pay and employment rights

Parental leave is unpaid unless the company expressly agrees otherwise.

During unpaid parental leave, the employee's statutory employment rights remain protected. This includes, where applicable:

- continuity of employment;
- entitlement to return to work;
- accrual of statutory holiday entitlement;
- protection from dismissal or detriment for requesting or taking statutory parental leave; and
- the benefit of contractual terms that continue during statutory leave.

Employees should contact the Human Resources Controller where they require clarification about pension contributions, contractual benefits or deductions during unpaid leave.

6. Requesting parental leave

Employees must give at least **21 days' notice** before the intended start date.

Where the leave is to begin at the time of a child's birth or adoption, notice should be given at least 21 days before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or placement.

The employee must confirm:

- their name;
- the child to whom the request relates;
- the proposed start date;
- the proposed end date;
- the number of weeks requested; and
- whether they have previously taken parental leave for that child.

Although the law does not always require notice to be in writing, Viamed requests that parental-leave applications are made in writing or through the appropriate Intrastats process so that a clear record is maintained.

7. Postponement of parental leave

The company may postpone a period of parental leave where the absence would cause significant disruption to the business.

The company will not postpone parental leave where:

- there is no significant business reason;
- the leave is to be taken by a father or partner immediately following a child's birth or adoption; or
- postponement would mean that the employee would lose the entitlement because the child would reach the relevant age.

Where parental leave is postponed, the company will:

- write to the employee within seven days of receiving the request;
- explain the reason for postponement;
- consult with the employee about alternative dates;
- propose an alternative start date within six months of the original requested date; and
- not reduce the amount of leave requested.

Any decision to postpone leave must be approved by the Human Resources Controller or a director.

8. Returning to work

An employee will normally return to the same job following a period of statutory parental leave.

Where the period of leave, or its combination with other statutory leave, means that returning to the same job is not reasonably practicable, the employee will be offered a suitable and appropriate alternative role in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Employees should confirm their expected return date before beginning leave and notify the company promptly if circumstances change.

Part B — Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

9. Purpose

Neonatal Care Leave provides eligible employees with additional time away from work where their baby requires qualifying neonatal care.

The entitlement applies to babies born on or after **6 April 2025**.

Neonatal Care Leave and Pay are additional to other statutory family-leave entitlements, including maternity, adoption, paternity and Shared Parental Leave.

10. Meaning of neonatal care

For the purposes of this policy, neonatal care may include:

- hospital care;
- medical care following discharge from hospital, where supervised by a consultant and involving ongoing hospital-arranged visits or monitoring; or
- palliative or end-of-life care.

The neonatal care must:

- begin within the first 28 days following the baby's birth; and
- continue for at least seven consecutive full days.

The baby must have been born on or after 6 April 2025.

11. Who may qualify

An employee may qualify where they are:

- the baby's parent;
- the partner of the baby's mother;
- an adoptive parent;
- the partner of an adoptive parent;

- an intended parent in a surrogacy arrangement; or
- another person covered by the statutory eligibility requirements.

The employee must:

- have responsibility, or expect to have responsibility, for the child's upbringing;
- be taking the leave to care for the child; and
- be employed in England, Scotland or Wales.

12. Neonatal Care Leave

Neonatal Care Leave is a **day-one employment right**. There is no minimum continuous-service requirement for the leave itself.

An eligible employee receives one week of Neonatal Care Leave for every seven consecutive full days that the baby receives qualifying neonatal care, up to a maximum of **12 weeks**.

All Neonatal Care Leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's date of birth.

13. When Neonatal Care Leave may be taken

There are two statutory periods for taking Neonatal Care Leave.

13.1 Tier 1 period

The Tier 1 period applies while the baby is receiving neonatal care and until the end of the seventh day following the day on which neonatal care ends.

During the Tier 1 period:

- leave may be taken in blocks of at least one week;
- separate weeks do not have to be taken consecutively; and
- leave may be interrupted by another pre-arranged period of statutory family leave.

Any remaining Neonatal Care Leave may, where permitted, be taken immediately after the other statutory leave.

13.2 Tier 2 period

The Tier 2 period applies more than one week after the baby has left neonatal care.

During the Tier 2 period:

- the employee must take the remaining Neonatal Care Leave as one continuous block; and
- the leave may be taken before or after another period of statutory family leave, subject to the relevant statutory rules.

An employee who is on maternity or adoption leave must take Neonatal Care Leave after the maternity or adoption leave has ended.

14. Notice during the Tier 1 period

Where the baby is still receiving neonatal care, or is within the first week after leaving neonatal care, the employee should notify the company:

- as soon as reasonably practicable;
- preferably before their normal start time on the first day of absence; and
- by telephone, message, email or another reasonable method.

Where the employee wishes the leave to continue for another week, they should notify the company by the end of the previous week.

The employee should tell the company as soon as reasonably practicable when the baby leaves neonatal care.

The company may agree a less frequent notification arrangement where the baby is expected to remain in neonatal care for an extended period.

15. Notice during the Tier 2 period

Where the baby left neonatal care more than one week previously, the employee must normally give:

- at least 15 days' notice for one week of leave; or
- at least 28 days' notice for two or more weeks of leave.

Tier 2 notice should be submitted in writing.

16. Information required

The employee should provide:

- their full name;
- the baby's date of birth;
- where applicable, the date of adoption placement or entry into Great Britain;
- the date neonatal care began;
- the date neonatal care ended, where known;
- the proposed start date of leave;
- the number of weeks requested; and
- confirmation that the leave is being taken to care for the child.

The employee may also be required to confirm their relationship to the child and their caring responsibility.

For multiple births, the relevant information should be provided for each baby.

The company may use an internal declaration form, written statement or the appropriate HMRC form.

17. Statutory Neonatal Care Pay

Statutory Neonatal Care Pay is separate from the right to Neonatal Care Leave.

To qualify for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay, the employee must normally:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the applicable qualifying week;
- remain employed until the week before the pay is due to begin;
- satisfy the statutory average-earnings requirement;
- meet the relationship and caring-responsibility requirements;
- provide the required notice and information; and
- qualify for Neonatal Care Leave.

For the 2026/27 tax year, Statutory Neonatal Care Pay is paid at the lower of:

- **£194.32 per week;** or
- **90% of the employee's average weekly earnings.**

The statutory rate and earnings threshold are reviewed annually. The company will apply the statutory figures in force when the leave is taken.

Tax and National Insurance will be deducted where applicable.

18. Notice for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay

During the Tier 1 period, written notice for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay must normally be provided within 28 days of the start of the leave.

During the Tier 2 period, written notice must normally be provided:

- at least 15 days before one week of pay is due to begin; or
- at least 28 days before two or more weeks of pay are due to begin.

The company may waive a notice requirement where permitted and where it is reasonable to do so.

18.1 Cancelling Tier 2 Leave or Pay

Where the baby left neonatal care more than one week previously, an employee may cancel a period of Neonatal Care Leave or Statutory Neonatal Care Pay by giving written notice.

The employee must normally give:

- at least 15 days' notice where one week was due to be taken; or
- at least 28 days' notice where two or more weeks were due to be taken.

A period of Tier 1 leave or pay cannot normally be cancelled after notice has been given.

These are the current statutory cancellation arrangements.

19. Where the employee does not qualify for pay

An employee may qualify for Neonatal Care Leave without qualifying for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay.

Where the company determines that an employee is not eligible for statutory pay, it will notify the employee within 28 days of receiving the pay request.

The company may use form NEO1 or provide equivalent written notification explaining:

- the employee's name, address and National Insurance number;
- the start and end dates of the period for which pay has been refused;
- the reason the employee is not eligible; and
- the name or contact details of the person responsible for dealing with the claim.

20. Employment protection

During Neonatal Care Leave, the employee's statutory employment rights remain protected, including:

- continuity of employment;
- accrual of holiday entitlement;
- entitlement to contractual pay increases;
- the right to return to work;
- protection from detriment or dismissal because they requested or took Neonatal Care Leave; and
- applicable redundancy protection.

The company will not subject an employee to unfavourable treatment because they have exercised, or proposed to exercise, a statutory right under this policy.

21. If the baby dies

Where the baby dies after the employee has qualified for Neonatal Care Leave, the employee may remain entitled to take the accrued Neonatal Care Leave in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Other leave may also be available, including:

- Parental Bereavement Leave;
- Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave;
- compassionate leave; or
- sickness absence where medically appropriate.

The employee should contact the Human Resources Controller or a director so that the available support and entitlements can be considered sensitively.

22. Records and confidentiality

The company will maintain appropriate records relating to:

- applications for unpaid parental leave;
- the amount of parental leave taken for each child;
- Neonatal Care Leave;
- Statutory Neonatal Care Pay;
- notices and declarations;

- payments made;
- periods for which payment was not made and the reason;
- supporting documentation; and
- decisions to postpone or refuse leave or pay.

Records relating to Statutory Neonatal Care Pay will be retained for at least three years from the end of the tax year to which they relate. Other records will be retained in accordance with the company's document-retention requirements.

Information relating to a child's health or neonatal treatment will be treated as confidential and processed in accordance with the company's Data Protection Policy.

23. Equality and non-discrimination

All requests will be considered fairly and without discrimination.

No employee will be treated unfavourably because of pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, disability, age, race, religion or belief, family or caring responsibilities, or any other legally protected status.

24. Responsibility

The Human Resources Controller is responsible for:

- receiving and recording applications;
- checking eligibility;
- confirming leave and pay arrangements;
- maintaining records;
- obtaining advice where eligibility is unclear; and
- ensuring that the statutory rates and requirements applied are current.

Employees are responsible for:

- providing accurate information;
- giving as much notice as reasonably practicable;
- supplying reasonable supporting evidence when requested; and
- notifying the company promptly of any relevant change.

25. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change to employment legislation, statutory pay rates or official government guidance.

Where there is any conflict between this policy and a statutory employment right, the statutory right in force at the relevant time will apply.

Please