



FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICY

**We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille,
on tape or in another non written format.**

Family Friendly Policy

POLICY PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy provides advice and guidance to managers and employees to GHA on the various rights and entitlements to Family Friendly Leave and Pay.

This policy applies in respect of all GHA employees. It does not apply to agency workers or the self-employed.

GHA appreciates that the workforce within the UK is changing and is becoming increasingly diverse with a high percentage of parents and individuals with caring responsibilities, and other individuals who, at some stage in their career / life, may require to take time off for a number of reasons.

Initially, it was only mothers who had family rights, in the form of maternity leave and maternity pay. More recently, family rights have been introduced that apply to fathers and same-sex partners as well as mothers. Both men and women, including adoptive parents, may be entitled to parental leave. Further, employees who have or adopt/foster a child may be entitled to paternity leave and pay or adoption leave and pay.

GHA understands that it can sometimes be difficult to combine work duties and family responsibilities. In recognition of this, the GHA is committed to ensuring a fair work-life balance for all employees, in order to enable them to care for their children aged 16 or under, or 18 if disabled, and to care for certain adults (by requests for flexible working arrangements).

GHA recognises that having a Family Friendly Policy will help ensure compliance with the provisions of current legislation and covers:

- Section A Maternity Leave and Pay Pages 3-10
- Section B Parental Leave Pages 10-13
- Section C Paternity Leave and Pay Pages 13-15
- Section D Adoption Leave and Pay Pages 15-19
- Section E Fostering Pages 19-21
- Section F Time Off for Dependants Pages 21-22
- Section G Carers Leave Pages 22-24
- Section H Surrogacy Pages 24-26
- Section I Fertility Treatment Leave Pages 26-29
- Section J Requesting Flexible Hours and Childcare Support Pages 28-29

For additional policies relating to families and time off please see the [GHA Time Off and Special Leave Policy](#) and [GHA - Policy on Hours of Work, Overtime, Related Allowances and Flexible Working Arrangements](#).

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SECTION A - MATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY

This section of the policy outlines the main statutory provisions for maternity as well as GHA occupational maternity provision. Further guidance can be obtained from Employee Relations and GHA Intranet.

1. Definitions

The definitions in this paragraph apply in this policy:-

“Expected Week of Childbirth” (EWC): the week, starting on a Sunday, in which your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth.

“Qualifying Week” is the fifteenth week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

“Relevant Period”: means the eight weeks ending with the Qualifying Week.

2. Entitlement to Maternity Leave

All employees are entitled up to 52 weeks’ maternity leave which is divided into 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave (OML) and 26 weeks’ of additional maternity leave (AML).

Employees may not carry out duties for GHA immediately after childbirth. This period of compulsory maternity leave lasts for 2 weeks from the date of childbirth (or until some later date if there is health and safety or other statutory requirements which prohibit the employee from attending their place of work).

3. Entitlement to Maternity Pay

3.1 Employees with less than 26 weeks’ service

If an employee has less than 26 weeks’ continuous service within any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group by the 15th week of Expected Week of Childbirth, she will be entitled to Maternity Allowance only (subject to certain conditions). This is paid weekly by Jobcentre Plus to those who do not qualify for statutory maternity pay. Maternity allowance is paid for 39 weeks;

See link: <http://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance>

If an employee is eligible to claim Maternity Allowance please contact the Payroll Department and request for a SMP1 form to be completed.

The current rate of SMP can be found at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/rates-thresholds.htm#3>

3.2. Employees with more than 26 weeks’ service

Subject paragraph 3.3 below, if an employee has more than 26 weeks’ continuous service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group at the end of the Qualifying Week and remains employed by any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group during that week, she will be entitled to occupational maternity pay as follows:-

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- 6 weeks' pay at nine tenths of average weekly earnings (90%) inclusive of any statutory maternity pay ("SMP") entitlement;
- 33 weeks' pay at five tenths pay (50%) plus any SMP entitlement;

The total occupational maternity pay and statutory maternity pay payable in any period shall not exceed normal pay.

3.3. Maternity Pay Conditions

The employee must continue to be pregnant at the 24th week of pregnancy, and have stopped all duties for GHA wholly or partly because of pregnancy or childbirth.

Week 1 of the maternity pay period is the week after the employee leaves their place of work or the start of maternity leave. SMP is payable whether or not an employee intends to return to their job at the end of their maternity leave.

To claim maternity pay, an employee must notify GHA by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth of the fact that she is pregnant, the date on which she wants maternity leave to start ("Intended Start Date"), and the Expected Week of Childbirth. If the employee is unable to give this notice, she should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable. The employee must also provide a certificate from a doctor or midwife (usually on a MAT B1 form) confirming their Expected Week of Childbirth.

The payment of maternity pay will cease when an employee returns to work.

Maternity pay will be paid into the employees' bank account on the same date that the salary would have been payable, and will be subject to deductions for tax, National Insurance and pension contributions in the usual way. Union dues will be deducted, as appropriate, throughout the period of maternity leave at the reduced rate.

If an employee has received the 33 weeks' pay at five tenths (50%) of occupational maternity pay, and does not physically return to work and remain at their place of work for at least 3 months after the end of maternity leave, she will be required to refund GHA the amount of occupational maternity pay paid for the 33 week period. This will be at the discretion of Employee Relations.

If the employee advises at the commencement of her maternity leave that she will not be returning following her maternity leave, she will not receive the 33 weeks at five tenths (50%) maternity pay. If the employee is unsure about whether or not she will return, she may defer her decision and Payroll will withhold payment until a decision is made.

3.4. Qualification and Calculation of SMP

Employees who qualify are entitled to up to 39 weeks' SMP. In order to qualify, you must:-

- have average weekly earnings in the Relevant Period at or above the lower earnings limit set by the Government;

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- have 26 weeks' continuous service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group at the end of the Qualifying Week and be still employed by any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group during that week;
- have provided us with a doctor's or midwife's certificate (MAT B1 form) stating your Expected Week of Childbirth;
- have given at least 28 days' notice (or, if that is not possible, as much notice as you can) of your intention to take maternity leave; and
- Still be pregnant 11 weeks before the start of the Expected Week of Childbirth or have already given birth.

SMP is calculated as follows:-

- first 6 weeks: SMP is paid at the rate of 90% of your average weekly earnings calculated over the Relevant Period;
- Remaining 33 weeks: SMP is paid at the prescribed rate which is set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or the earnings-related rate referred to above if this is lower.

SMP is payable only in respect of complete weeks. There is no daily rate.

Average weekly earnings are calculated for the different pay periods, as follows:-

Add together the payments made on the last pay day before the end of the qualifying week (15 weeks before the expected week of confinement) and the payment made on the previous pay day. Then divide by 8 to produce the weekly average.

In the unfortunate event that a child is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or is born alive but dies after birth the mother will retain her rights to maternity leave and to maternity pay if she qualifies for it. If the mother does qualify, her maternity leave / pay will start on the day after the child was born.

3.5. When does the entitlement to SMP end?

Payment of SMP will be stopped when:-

- an employee has received SMP for the period of entitlement;
- an employee starts work after childbirth, but before the end of her maternity pay period with another employer - SMP will end on the Saturday of the week before the week in which she starts work;
- an employee dies - SMP will end on the Saturday of the week in which the death occurred;
- An employee is taken into legal custody - SMP will end with the last complete week within the maternity pay period before the employee is taken into custody.

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3.6. Exclusion Form

If an employee is excluded from entitlement to SMP, we will complete a Form SMP1 and forward it, together with the MATB1 form (if already provided); to the employee within 7 days of the decision being made that she is not entitled to SMP. This will enable her to contact the Department of Works & Pensions in order to claim maternity allowance.

4. Notice Requirements

To qualify for maternity leave you must give notice of your EWC and your chosen maternity leave start date by the end of the QW (or as soon as possible afterwards) by completing the form [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#) and providing your MATB1 form available from your midwife.

To claim SMP, you must give GHA 28 days' notice of the date you want this to start. In practise it is usually easiest if you give this notice at the same time as notifying us of the date you want your maternity leave to start (the request for maternity leave form contains a box for this purpose).

5. Health and Safety

GHA has a general duty to take care of the health and safety of all employees. Once you have informed us of your pregnancy we are required to carry out a risk assessment, to assess your place of work to identify any risks to women who are pregnant, have given birth within the last six months or are still breastfeeding.

We will provide you with information as to any risks identified in the risk assessment, and any preventive and protective measures that have been or will be taken. If we consider that, as a new or expectant mother, you would be exposed to health hazards in carrying out your normal duties we will take such steps as are necessary (for as long as they are necessary) to avoid those risks. This may involve:-

- changing your work conditions or hours of work;
- temporary adjustments to your role;
- offering you suitable alternative duties on terms that are the same or not substantially less favourable; or
- Suspending you from all duties, which will be on full pay unless you have unreasonably refused suitable alternative work.

6. Time off for Antenatal Care

Employees are entitled to request paid time off during normal working hours, to receive antenatal care, regardless of the length of service or hours of work. Wherever possible, appointments should be arranged at the start or the end of the working day.

Antenatal care includes appointments with a medical practitioner, hospital and dental appointments, relaxation and parent craft classes and clinics.

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Employees should advise their line manager that they will be absent, as far in advance of appointments as possible. Employees may be asked to produce appointment cards and a medical certificate stating that they are pregnant before permission is granted for time off.

(As of 1 October 2014) Fathers and partners of pregnant woman are entitled to unpaid time off to attend two antenatal appointments.

7. Sickness Absence

Periods of pregnancy-related sickness absence shall be paid in the same manner as any other sickness absence. However, if you are absent for a pregnancy-related illness after the start of the fourth week before your Expected Week of Childbirth, your maternity leave will start automatically.

If you are too ill to return to work at the end of your maternity leave period, GHA's normal arrangements for sickness allowance will apply in accordance with the sickness benefit scheme. Absence related to maternity will not accumulate with non-related absences.

8. Starting Maternity Leave

8.1 When you can start maternity leave

You can choose to start your maternity leave at any time from the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

You must notify us of your Intended Start Date as set out in accordance with paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 above.

Maternity leave and pay will start on the day you have chosen, unless:

- Your baby is born before the date you have chosen as the start of your maternity. In this, your maternity leave and pay will start on the day after the birth of your child. You must let us know the date of the birth in writing as soon as possible or you risk losing your rights.
- You are absent from work for a pregnancy-related reason in the four weeks before your EWC. In this case, your maternity leave and pay will start on the day after your first day of your pregnancy-related absence. Again, you must let us know that you are absent for a pregnancy-related reason as soon as possible or you risk losing your rights, unless we agree to delay it.
- You must take a minimum of two weeks maternity leave immediately after the birth of your child. The law prohibits you from attending your work during the two weeks following childbirth (known as compulsory maternity leave).

8.2 Changing the start of maternity leave

You can bring forward the date you want to start maternity leave by giving GHA written notice at least 28 days before the new start date or, if this is not possible, as much notice as you reasonably can.

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You can postpone your intended start date by giving us written notice at least 28 days before the original intended start date or, if this is not possible, as much notice as you reasonably can.

9. Keeping in touch during maternity leave

We may make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your maternity leave, for example to update you on changes within Wheatley Group or to discuss arrangements for your return.

You may carry out your work or attend training for up to 10 days during maternity leave without affecting your rights or bringing your maternity leave or SMP to an end (known as Keeping in Touch (KIT) days). The arrangements, including pay, would be set in advance for any KIT days, by agreement with your line manager and / or Employee Relations. You are not obliged to undertake any such duties / training during maternity leave. In any case, you must not carry out any work duties or attend training in the two weeks after the birth.

10. Return to work

10.1 Expected Return Date

Once we know the date you intend to start your maternity leave, we will then write to you within 28 days to inform you of the date we will expect you to return to work ("Expected Return Date"). If you change the day you want to start your maternity leave or your maternity leave is automatically triggered by your child's birth or by a pregnancy-related absence in the four weeks before the EWC, the last day of your maternity leave will change. In this case GHA will write to you again with a revised Expected Return Date.

We will expect you back at your place of work on your Expected Return Date unless you tell us otherwise. It will help us if, during your maternity leave, you are able to confirm that you will be returning to work as expected.

We will assume that you will take the full one year's maternity leave when calculating the end date.

10.2 Returning to work early

If you wish to return before the Expected Return Date, you must inform your line manager, in writing, at least 8 weeks before the Expected Return Date. If not enough notice is given, we may postpone your return date until eight weeks after you gave notice, or to the Expected Return Date if sooner.

10.3 Returning late

If you wish to return later than the Expected Return Date, you should either:-

- request unpaid parental leave, giving us as much notice as possible but not less than 21 days; or

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- Request paid annual leave in accordance with your contract, which will be at our discretion.

If you are unable to return to work due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and [GHA – Sickness Absence Policy](#) will apply.

In any other case, a late return to work will be treated as unauthorised absence and possibly a misconduct issue, in accordance with [GHA – Discipline Policy](#).

10.4 Deciding not to return

If you do not wish to return to work after your maternity leave, you must give GHA the notice required, as specified in your contract of employment. The amount of maternity leave left to run when you give notice must be at least equal to your contractual notice period; otherwise we may require you to return to work for the remainder of the notice period.

If you have received the 33 weeks at five tenths (50%) of occupational maternity pay and do not physically return to work in accordance with the time limits set and remain at work or with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group for at least 3 months, you will be required to refund Wheatley Group the amount of maternity pay paid to you for the 33 week period. This will be at the discretion of Employee Relations.

10.5 Your rights when you return

You are normally entitled to return to work in the same position as you held before commencing your maternity leave. If this is not possible then you will be redeployed to a suitable role of an equivalent grade. Your terms shall be the same as they would have been had you not been absent.

If you have taken any period of AML or more than four weeks' parental leave, and it is not reasonably practicable for us to allow you to return into the same position, we may give you another suitable and appropriate role on terms that are not less favourable.

10.6 Returning to work in a part-time role / flexible working hours

We will deal with any requests by employees to change their working (such as part-time / role-share, condensed hours) after maternity leave on a case-by-case basis. There is no absolute right to insist on a part-time role, but you do have a statutory right to request flexible hours of work and we will try to accommodate your wishes unless there is a justifiable reason for refusal, bearing in mind the needs of our business. It is helpful if requests are made as early as possible. The procedure for dealing with such requests is set out in [GHA - Policy on Hours of Work, Overtime, Related Allowances and Flexible Working Arrangements](#).

11. Benefits during Maternity Leave

All of your contractual benefits will be maintained (except for basic remuneration) throughout the ordinary and additional maternity leave period. Non-contractual benefits may be withdrawn but only where consistent with GHA procedures.

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11.1 Holiday entitlement during maternity leave

During OML and AML, annual leave will continue to accrue at the rate provided under your contract.

If the holiday year is due to finish during the maternity leave or shortly after it ends you should plan to use your outstanding holiday entitlement before starting your maternity leave. Alternatively, you might consider ending your maternity leave early and transferring onto paid holiday in order to use up your entitlement.

Under GHA – Time Off and Special Leave Policy, holiday entitlement not taken by 31 January will normally be forfeited; pay in lieu of any outstanding leave entitlement is not usually granted. Normally, GHA expects you to plan your maternity leave to enable you to take your full holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year. However, if there are exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, please speak to Employee Relations.

If an employee intends to take annual leave, prior to her return from maternity leave, she must confirm in writing the date she wishes maternity leave to end, the subsequent period to be taken as annual leave and the physical date of return to work. This must be done at least 8 weeks before the maternity leave period ends. When a public holiday occurs during ordinary or additional maternity leave, the employee upon return to work shall be entitled to a day off in lieu.

11.2 Pension membership/contributions

Employees will receive a contributions form from their pension scheme during their maternity meeting with GHA, detailing the options available during maternity leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that during any period of maternity leave that their pension contributions are correct.

All pension queries should be addressed directly to the employees' pension scheme.

SECTION B – PARENTAL LEAVE

This section of the policy is intended to summarise your statutory rights to parental leave.

1. What is parental leave?

GHA recognises that working parents sometimes need to take time off to care for their child(ren) or make any necessary arrangements in the best interest of their child(ren).

Parental leave gives qualifying employees the right from 8 March 2013 to take 18 weeks unpaid parental leave in respect of each child (*due to the Revised Parental Leave Regulations 2013*).

2. Qualifying for parental leave

GHA employees will qualify for parental leave if:

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- You have at least one year's continuous service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group (at the date of commencement of leave), unless the child is entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA), in which case no minimum length of service is required;
- You have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for a child; and
- You are taking leave to spend time with or otherwise care for that child.
- You have the parental responsibility for a child if you are the birth or adoptive parent or if you are the legal guardian of the child. If you are unsure as to whether or not you have parental responsibility for a child you should contact Employee Relations who will discuss this in confidence with you.

Any parental leave that you take in relation to a child while working for another employer or organisation within the Wheatley Group counts towards your overall 18 week entitlement. If you have taken parental leave in relation to a child during previous or concurrent employment you are accountable to provide these details to Employee Relations.

Both parents are entitled to parental leave if they are employed by any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group.

3. Timing of parental leave

From 5 April 2015 parents of children under 18 will be entitled to request parental leave.

Unless you are taking leave in respect of a child entitled to a DLA you can:

- Only take parental leave in blocks of one week's leave or a multiple of a week's leave;
- Only take up to four weeks' parental leave each year in relation to each child. A year for this purpose begins when you first become entitled to take parental leave in relation to the child in question.

4. Notice requirements

You must give at least 21 days' notice if you wish to take parental leave and need to inform GHA of the start and end dates of the proposed period of leave. If you would like to take parental leave immediately after a period of paternity leave, it would help us if you could give us notice of this before the start of your paternity.

If you wish to take parental leave commencing immediately on the birth of a child, you must give at least 21 days' notice before the expected week of childbirth (EWC). The notice must specify the EWC and the duration of the period of leave required.

If you wish to take parental leave commencing immediately on the adoption of a child, you must give at least 21 days' notice before the expected week of placement (EWP), and if this is not possible, as much notice as possible. The notice must specify the EWP and the duration of the period of leave required.

You should complete and return the [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#) available on the intranet.

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If you do not give proper notice your time off may be treated as unauthorised absence and possibly a misconduct issue, in accordance with [GHA – Discipline Policy](#).

5. Evidential requirements

If requested, you must provide evidence of your responsibility or expected responsibility for the child, the child's date of birth or date of placement and (where relevant) the child's entitlement to the DLA.

You will also be required to provide details of parental leave taken in any previous employment or any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group.

6. Postponing parental leave

If we consider that the operation of the business service delivery would be unduly disrupted by taking parental leave, we are entitled to postpone your parental leave for up to six months. We will discuss this with you and will give you written notice of the new start and end dates of the postponed parental leave, together with the reasons for the postponement, within seven days of you giving notice of your intention to take leave.

We will not, however, postpone your leave where you have given proper notification to take parental leave on the birth or adoption of a child. Nor will we postpone the leave, in the case of an adopted or disabled child, if the postponement would result in the leave being taken after the child's 18th birthday.

You will not lose your parental leave entitlement if, because of our postponement of such leave, it remains untaken on your child's 18th birthday (or on the eighteenth anniversary of the child's adoption placement).

7. Returning to work

You will normally be entitled to return to the same position following parental leave. If, however, your period of parental leave is longer than 4 weeks or has been combined with additional maternity or adoption leave, and is not reasonably possible for you to return to the same role, you will be offered a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

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8. Pay and benefits during parental leave

Where an employee has been absent under Parental Leave, the period of absence shall not affect the length of his/her holiday entitlement in the year(s) in which the leave falls. Public holidays will be forfeited.

Part-time employees' entitlement to Parental Leave is the same as that of full-time employees, applied on a pro-rata basis.

The entitlement to Parental Leave applies to five-day working patterns. For alternative working patterns equivalent and, where appropriate, pro-rated leave entitlements will be calculated.

Where an employee takes a period of parental leave under this policy for purposes other than spending time with or otherwise caring for their child, this will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue under [GHA - Disciplinary Policy](#).

SECTION C – PATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY

This policy is intended to summarise your statutory rights to paternity leave.

1. What is paternity leave?

Paternity leave is available to qualifying employees of both sexes on the birth or adoption of a child. Paternity Leave gives qualifying employees the right to take either one week or two consecutive weeks leave at or around the time of the birth/placement.

Note: if you have decided that as the partner you are taking Adoption Leave then you will not be entitled to Parental Leave.

2. Qualifying for Paternity leave

You will qualify for Paternity Leave if:

- you are either the father of the child or the spouse/civil partner/partner of the child's mother or adopter;
- you have or expect to have responsibility, or main responsibility, for the upbringing of the child;
- you are taking the paternity leave to care for the child or to support the child's mother or adopter in caring for the child; and
- You have 26 weeks' continuous service within any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group by the end of the qualifying week (QW). The QW as defined in detail in Section A and D of this policy but, broadly speaking, it is 15 weeks before the baby is due or you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption.

2.1 Notice requirements

In the case of a birth, you must give notice of your intention to take Paternity Leave by the end of the QW by completing [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#).

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In the case of adoption, you must give notice of your intention to take Paternity Leave no more than seven days after the child is matched by completing [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#).

2.2 Pay

Paternity Leave is paid at full pay including statutory paternity pay.

You will be paid on your normal pay day, subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions.

Details of statutory paternity pay can be found at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/rates-thresholds.htm#3>

2.3 Length and timing of Paternity Leave

You can take either one week or two consecutive weeks' Paternity Leave. You are not entitled to take two separate one-week periods of leave or a period of leave which is less than one week in duration.

Paternity Leave cannot be taken before the child is born or placed for adoption and must be taken within 56 days of the child's birth or placement. If the child is born prematurely, Paternity Leave can be taken up to 56 days after the first day of the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

Within these limits you have three options available to you when choosing when to start Paternity Leave:

- The actual day the child is born or placed (whether this is earlier or later than expected). If you are at your place of work on this day, your Paternity Leave and pay will start the following day.
- a specified number of days after the child is born or placed (for example, two weeks after the child is born or placed for adoption) whether this is earlier or later than expected.
- A fixed date of your choice, which must be later than the first day of the EWC or the expected placement date (EPD).

If you choose to start your Paternity Leave on a fixed and predetermined date and the child is not born or placed for adoption by that date, you must change the date you want to start your leave and notify us in writing as soon as you reasonably can.

You must confirm in writing the actual date of the child's birth/placement as soon afterwards as you reasonably can.

2.4 Changing the dates of Paternity Leave

Where you are to take Paternity Leave, you can vary the start date specified in your original notice by giving us written notice to vary. This must be given to us as follows:

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- where you now wish your leave to start on the day of the child's birth or placement, at least 28 days before the first day of the EWC or EPD as appropriate;
- where you now wish your leave to start a specified number of days after the child's birth or placement, at least 28 days (minus the specified number of days) before the first day of the EWC or EPD; or
- Where you now wish to vary your leave to start on a specific date, or a different date to that originally specified, at least 28 days before that date.

If you cannot give us 28 days' written notice to vary as set out above, you should give us written notice of the change as soon as you can.

3. Benefits

During Paternity Leave we will maintain your benefits (but see below for pension benefits), although you are not entitled to wages or salary.

3.1 Rights under the pension scheme

Employees will receive a contributions form from their pension scheme during their paternity meeting with GHA, detailing the options available during paternity leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that during any period of paternity leave that their pension contributions are correct.

All pension queries should be addressed directly to the employees' pension scheme.

4. Position on return

You are normally entitled to return to the same position following either Paternity Leave. However, if you have combined your Paternity Leave with a period of Shared Parental leave of more than four weeks, and it is not reasonably possible for you to return to the same position; you will be offered a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

If you are interested in applying for different working arrangements on your return to work, you should refer to [GHA - Policy on Hours of Work, Overtime, Related Allowances and Flexible Working Arrangements](#). If you want the changes to start on your return from paternity leave, you need to ensure that you make your application in good time.

SECTION D – ADOPTION LEAVE AND PAY

This section is intended to summarise your statutory rights to adoption leave.

1. What is adoption leave

Employees who are adopting a child under the age of 18 may be entitled to adoption leave. The right to adoption leave is set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Paternity and Adoption leave Regulation 2002 (as amended).

Where a couple is adopting, they must decide which partner should take adoption leave. The other partner may then be entitled to paternity leave ([see section B](#)).

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2. Qualifying for adoption leave

You will qualify for up to 52 weeks' adoption leave which is divided into:

- 26 weeks' Ordinary adoption leave (OAL)
- 26 weeks' Additional adoption leave (AAL)

You are eligible if:

- you are the child's adopter (in cases where a couple adopts, only one of them can elect to take adoption leave, even if they have different employers, so one of them must elect to be the adopter for this purpose)
- you have notified the adoption agency that you agree to the child being placed with you and have agreed the date of placement

If a foster-child or stepchild is being adopted you will not usually be eligible for adoption leave because there is no matching by an adoption agency.

3. Qualifying for adoption pay

You will qualify for statutory adoption pay (SAP) for 39 weeks if you meet the conditions to qualify for adoption leave and your normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks before the end of the QW are not less than the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance contributions.

The lower earnings limit is reviewed annually. We will inform you if your normal weekly earnings are below the lower earnings limit.

If you are not entitled to SAP we will give you a form explaining why this is the case. This form can be used to apply for income support.

4. Notice requirements

Please let us know if you are trying to adopt a child so that we can plan for your leave.

Once you are notified of being matched with a child you have seven days in which to notify us of your intention to take adoption leave and the date you intend it to start (see below).

You should give this notice by completing the form [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#) which can be downloaded from GHA Intranet and provide a "matching certificate" from the adoption agency.

To claim SAP you must give us a minimum of 28 days' notice of the date when you would like this to start. In practice it is usually easiest if you give us this notice at the same time as notifying us of the date when you want your adoption leave to start. There is a section on the form for this purpose.

5. Adoption pay

If an employee qualifies for Adoption Leave they will be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) and Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP) as follows:-

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- **Statutory Adoption Pay** – 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks
- £139.58 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks;

SAP is paid at a flat rate prescribed by the government each year, or 90% of your normal weekly earnings, whichever is the lower. The current rate of SAP can be found at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/paye/rates-thresholds.htm#3>.

- **Occupational Adoption Pay** – 33 weeks at half (50%) normal pay plus any SMP entitlement

You will be paid SAP and OAP on your normal pay day, subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions.

The total Statutory Adoption Pay and Occupational Adoption Pay in any period shall not exceed normal pay.

6. Pre – adoption leave

You can request paid time off work in order to attend meetings or appointments in relation to the adoption process and this will not be unreasonably refused. You must advise your line manager as soon as your application for adoption has been lodged with the Adoption Agency. Proof of the requirement to attend court sessions, interviews or other meetings linked with the adoption process may be required.

Where possible meetings should be arranged out with core working hours and you should advise your line manager as soon as an appointment has been made. A maximum of five additional working days will be available for this purpose. This will be calculated on a pro rata basis for part-time / job-share employees. Partners of the primary adopter can also request unpaid time off to attend two appointments linked to the adoption process.

7. Starting adoption leave and pay

You can choose to start your adoption leave and SAP on:

- the day the child is actually placed with you (whether this turns out to be earlier or later than expected)
- a fixed and predetermined date of your choice within the 14-day period before the expected placement date (EPD)

If you choose to start your leave on the day the child is placed with you and you are at your work that day, your adoption leave and SAP will start the following day.

8. Changing your start date

You are entitled to change the date you would like your adoption leave to start as long as you give notice of the new date in writing. If the reason for the change of date is because you want to start your leave on the day the child is placed with you, you must give at least 28 days' notice of the EPD. If you are choosing a predetermined date, notice must be given at least 28 days before that date.

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In either case, if it is not reasonably possible to give 28 days' notice, you must give as much notice as you reasonably can.

9. Disrupted placement

If you are notified after you have started your adoption leave that the placement will not go ahead, or the placement is disrupted during your leave, you must notify us as soon as you reasonably can. Your entitlement to adoption leave and SAP / OAP will continue for a further eight weeks. In such circumstances, we will approach returning to your work on a case-by-case basis.

10. Return to work

Once we know the intended start date of your adoption leave, we will write to you within 28 days to tell you when your leave will end. If the start dates of your adoption leave changes, the last day of your adoption leave will also change. In this case we will write to you again to advise you of the new end date.

We will assume that you will take the full one year's adoption leave entitlement when calculating the end date. You can return to work sooner than this if you wish, but you must give us at least eight weeks' notice in writing.

11. Keeping in touch during adoption leave

We may be in touch with you occasionally during your adoption leave, for example to update you on a situation with work or to discuss arrangements for your return. Please discuss with your line manager the level of contact you would like.

You can conduct your work or attend training for up to ten days (known as Keeping in Touch (KIT) days) during your adoption leave without affecting your rights to SAP / OAP or interrupting your adoption leave. We will aim to agree with you in advance an appropriate rate of pay for any such days.

12. Position on return

If you return to work within 26 weeks of starting your adoption leave you are entitled to return to the same position. If you return to work after 26 weeks and it is not reasonably possible for you to return to the same position, you will be offered an alternative position on not less favourable terms.

If you are interested in applying to work flexibly on your return to work, you should refer to [GHA - Policy on Hours of Work, Overtime, Related Allowances and Flexible Working Arrangements](#). If you want the changes to start when you return from adoption leave, please make your application in good time.

13. Resignation

If you wish to resign, you must give the proper amount of notice which is due under your contract of employment. You will retain your full entitlement to SAP unless you start working for a new employer after the QW. However, if you have received Occupational Adoption Pay of 33 weeks at half (50%) of your normal pay and do not physically return to work in accordance with the time limits set and remain at your place

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of work for a least 3 months you will be required to refund Wheatley Group the amount of occupational adoption pay for the 33 week period.

14. Benefits during leave

We will maintain your benefits during adoption leave (but see below for pension benefits), although you will not be entitled to your full normal wages or salary.

15.1 Holiday entitlement during adoption leave

During OAL and AAL, annual leave will continue to accrue at the rate provided under your contract of employment.

If the holiday year is due to finish during the adoption leave or shortly after it ends you should plan to use your outstanding holiday entitlement before starting your adoption leave. Alternatively, you might consider ending your adoption leave early and transferring onto paid holiday in order to use up your entitlement.

Under [GHA - Time off and Special Leave Policy](#), holiday entitlement not taken by 31 January will normally be forfeited; pay in lieu of any outstanding leave entitlement is not usually granted. Normally, GHA expects you to plan your adoption leave to enable you to take your full holiday entitlement in the relevant holiday year. However, if there are exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, please speak to Employee Relations.

If an employee intends to take annual leave, prior to their return from adoption leave, they must confirm in writing the date they wish their adoption leave to end, the subsequent period to be taken as annual leave and the physical date of return to work. This must be done at least 8 weeks before the adoption leave period ends. When a public holiday occurs during ordinary or additional adoption leave, the employee upon return to work shall be entitled to a day off in lieu.

15.2 Rights under the pension scheme

Employees will receive a contributions form from their pension scheme during their adoption meeting with GHA, detailing the options available during adoption leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that during any period of adoption leave that their pension contributions are correct.

All pension queries should be addressed directly to the employees' pension scheme.

SECTION E – FOSTERING

There is no statutory right to paid time off for an employee who wishes to foster a child. However, GHA believes that it is important to support employees who are considering being the main carer by fostering a baby / child (under the age of 18) and are looking for time off to support them in the initial stages of this process.

This section of the policy is, therefore, to enable an employee who wishes to foster a baby / child to take a period of leave to help the baby / child settle into the family and adjust to new circumstances.

1. Qualifying for foster leave

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Employees' of GHA who have 12 months continuous or more service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group are eligible to apply for foster leave.

It is also recognised that a single person or same sex couples may foster a baby / child.

2. Entitlement to foster leave

GHA has a flexible approach to fostering, which can be varying lengths of time, from very short term to long term fostering. If employees are considering fostering a baby / child they should discuss their intention to foster with their line manager as soon as possible to ascertain the support they will need.

For very short term fostering an employee may be entitled to paid time off as follows:

- ½ day per week for three weeks (this may be extended by up to a maximum of a further three ½ days)

The overall leave must not exceed six ½ days in a six week period.

Where employees regularly foster children, managers should contact Employee Relations for advice.

For longer term fostering GHA can consider providing foster leave and pay in accordance with the arrangements as detailed in [Section D - Adoption Leave / Pay](#).

Managers should contact Employee Relations to determine whether time off should be granted under short term fostering or adoption leave.

3. Applying for foster leave

GHA expects an employee to let them know if they are trying to foster a baby /child so that they can plan for your leave.

Once you are notified by the appropriate authorities that you have been matched with a baby / child you have seven days or as soon as practicable that it is your intention to apply for foster leave.

You should give this notice by completing the form [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#) which can be downloaded from GHA Intranet and you must also provide a copy of written confirmation from the appropriate authorities.

4. Pay for foster leave

You will be paid your full normal salary, on your normal pay day, subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions.

5. Additional Foster Leave (AFL)

Should you foster a child who is of pre-school or primary school age, you may be granted unpaid leave (up to a maximum of four weeks) from the commencement of the

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child's placement at nursery or school in respect of each child fostered that meets this requirement.

An employee who wishes to request unpaid AFL must give at least 28 days' notice of the AFL for pre-school or primary school age by completing the form [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#) which can be downloaded from GHA Intranet.

Additional Foster Leave may also be granted for review meetings, this will be unpaid.

6. Benefits during foster leave

We will maintain your benefits during foster leave (but see [Section D - 15.2 for pension benefits](#)), although you may not be entitled to your full normal wages or salary.

SECTION F– EMERGENCY TIME OFF TO HELP DEPENDANTS

This section is intended to summarise your statutory rights to time off during working hours to deal with emergencies involving their dependants. This right is given by the Employment Rights Act 1996.

1. What is emergency time off to help dependants?

All employees, regardless of their length of service or sex, have the right not to be unreasonably refused a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to deal with emergencies involving their dependants.

2. Qualifying for emergency time off from work

You can request emergency unpaid time off from work in the following circumstances:

- to help when a dependant is ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to arrange for an ill or injured dependant to be cared for
- to deal with unexpected changes to a dependant's care arrangements
- as a result of the death of a dependant; and
- to deal with an incident involving a child which occurs unexpectedly during school time

A 'dependant' is generally your spouse or partner, child or parent. With some exceptions, a person who lives in the same household as you is also a dependant. Depending on the reason for which you are taking time off, a dependant can also be someone who reasonably relies on you for assistance during illness or to make arrangements for the provision of their care. If you are unsure whether someone is your dependant, contact Employee Relations who will discuss this in confidence with you.

3. Requesting emergency time off for a dependant

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If you need emergency time off to help a dependant, you must advise your line manager as soon as possible, informing them of the circumstances and the likely duration.

You are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with the emergency. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances. In most cases a day or less should be sufficient. You are not entitled to take time off from work to provide on-going care for a dependant (such as a child with an underlying health condition), nor are you entitled to take unlimited amounts of time off from work to care for a dependant who suffers from a recurring illness. Once you know that a dependant suffers from an underlying medical condition which is likely to cause them to suffer regular relapses, it is no longer something unforeseen or unexpected. Please speak to your line manager if you would like to discuss a short or long-term change to your working pattern.

4. Pay for emergency time off for a dependant

GHA recognises that employees may need to make special arrangements; for example sickness of a dependant and therefore GHA will usually authorise leave with normal pay, for one day. This may be extended on a paid or unpaid according to the circumstances agreed by your line manager.

In ordinary circumstances, GHA expects emergency time off for dependants that exceeds one day to be authorised with holiday entitlement, flexi-time or as unpaid leave.

The amount of leave will be based on what is reasonable and necessary with the information that the line manager has available to them at that particular time. This is not expected to normally exceed two or three days.

5. Contact during emergency time off for a dependant

You should keep your line manager updated daily as to the likely duration of your absence, unless we agree otherwise. When you would like to take more time off than you originally advised, you must contact your line manager as soon as possible.

6. Returning to work after emergency time off for a dependant

Upon return to work you may be required to complete and submit the form [GHA – Time Off for a Dependant](#) detailing the reason for your time off. You may also be asked to provide evidence of the reason for your absence.

7. Refusing a request for emergency time off for a dependant

We will not unreasonably refuse a request for emergency time off to help dependants. If you think your request has been unreasonably refused, you should discuss this with your line manager or trade union representative, in the first instance.

SECTION G – CARER'S LEAVE

GHA recognise some of you may have caring responsibilities for seriously sick elderly or disabled relatives, partners, family or dependants. We realise that these

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responsibilities may place extra demands on you and could affect your performance at work; therefore we want to do what we can to support you in balancing your work and caring commitments.

1. What we mean by a carer

If you are a carer you are responsible for caring for and supporting a disabled, elderly or sick partner, relative or near relative or someone who lives with you who is unable to care for themselves because they are ill, frail or have a disability. By near relative we mean, parents, a parent in law, an adult child, an adopted adult child, siblings (including in laws), uncles, aunts, grandparents or step-relatives.

2. Pay for time off for a carer

GHA recognise that you may need to take time off to support those they care for. For example: hospital appointments, attending benefit meetings or mandatory meetings such as banks or solicitors. Under these circumstances, GHA as of January 2016 will give you up to 3 days paid leave on a pro rata basis (up to a maximum of 21hours) in any calendar year to allow you to carry out your caring responsibilities.

3. Applying for Leave

You have the right to apply for time off and this should be discussed with your line manager who will consider all requests sympathetically and will be agreed in line with service delivery commitments and at their discretion. You should complete the form GHA Notification of Leave form which can be downloaded from Wheatley Group Services intranet.

4. Supporting information

You may need to produce documentation of the arrangements which require you to take carers leave such as medical appointments, or letters confirming legal hearings or mandatory meetings.

In the event of an emergency please refer to section F of this document which relates to emergency time off for a dependent.

5. Other support for carers

GHA understand that caring responsibilities can be long term and change over time and have additional support that you can access:

- Employee Assistance Provider – Confidential Care 0800 085 1376

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- W.E are Wheatley Group – Carers Network
- People Like Me Section – Carers Page on HOLMES
- Flexible Working
- Purchased Leave – up to 5 days
- Trade Unions

SECTION H – SURROGACY

This section of the policy defines the term surrogacy and legal entitlement to statutory leave and pay.

1. What is surrogacy?

Surrogacy is the practise whereby one woman (the surrogate mother) carries a child for another person (the commissioning couple) as a result of an agreement prior to conception that the child should be handed over to the commissioning couple after birth by means of a parental order.

2. The birth mother

What the birth mother plans to do with her baby after it has no impact on her right to maternity leave or statutory maternity pay. Pregnant employees have the right, irrespective of length of service, age, marital status or any other factor, to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave and return to their work afterwards.

If an employee meets the eligibility requirement in [Section A – Maternity Leave and Pay](#), and is giving birth on behalf of surrogate parents (the commissioning couple), then she will be entitled to both maternity leave and pay as outlined in this policy.

3. The surrogate parent(s)

For employees starting a family through a legal surrogacy arrangement, where the baby is the subject of a Parental Order, there is no legal entitlement to statutory leave and pay. However, GHA recognises the need to grant time off for employees to adapt, build a relationship with their child and develop new routines. Therefore, GHA offers an Occupational Surrogacy Leave and Pay Scheme for eligible employees.

The surrogate parent(s) may also be entitled to unpaid parental leave (see [Section B – Parental Leave](#)).

However, if the surrogate parent(s) plan to adopt the child through an approved adoption agency then you may be entitled to adoption leave. In order to qualify you must provide:

- A copy of the MATB1 prior to the birth of the baby, and
- A copy of the “Parental Order” as soon as possible after the baby’s birth and no later than six months after commencement of adoption leave.

The employee must also meet the eligibility requirement and comply with the details outlined in [Section D – Adoption leave and pay](#).

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4. Qualifying for Occupational Surrogacy Leave (OSL)

If an employee has more than 26 weeks' continuous service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group and has secured a Parental Order granting legal responsibility for a child (following a legal surrogacy arrangement), will be entitled to equivalent rights as those employees who qualify for Adoption Leave and Pay as detailed in Section D in this policy, which is:-

You will qualify for up to 52 weeks' surrogacy leave which is divided into:

- 26 weeks' Ordinary Surrogacy Leave (OSL)
- 26 weeks' Additional Surrogacy Leave (ASL)

You are eligible if:

- You have provided GHA with a copy of the MATB1 form, prior to the birth of the baby
- You have provided a copy of the Parental Order within 6 months of the baby's birth
- You must have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service with any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group to benefit from the entitlements under this section.
- Where both individuals who secure a Parental Order granting legal responsibility for a child are employed by any of the Wheatley Group organisations, only one individual shall benefit from this entitlement.

5. Occupational Surrogacy Pay

You will qualify for occupational surrogacy pay (OSP) for 39 weeks if you meet the conditions to qualify for surrogacy leave.

- 39 weeks at half normal pay (50%)
- 13 weeks unpaid

If the employee has received the Occupational Surrogacy Pay of 39 weeks at half (50%) of normal pay, and does not physically return to work in accordance with the time limits set and remain at work for at least 3 months, he/she will be required to refund Wheatley Group the amount of Occupational Surrogacy Pay for the 39 week period.

Note: as this is an Occupational benefit, there is no legal entitlement to statutory pay during any period of surrogacy leave.

6. When does surrogacy leave commence?

Eligible employees can choose to start their surrogacy leave on the date of the baby's birth or on a pre-determined date from 14 days before the baby's due date. Employees should inform their line manager and Employee Relations of their intention to take surrogacy/adoption leave (whichever is applicable) under a surrogacy arrangement at least 28 days before they intend to commence their leave, unless this is not reasonably practicable. The employee will also need to complete the [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#), which can be downloaded from the intranet, confirming the following:

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- When the baby who is the subject of the surrogate agreement, is due to be born, and
- When they want their surrogacy leave to start.

7. Failure to provide a “Parental Order”

GHA retains the right to reclaim any payment made for surrogacy leave, if the employee fails to provide a copy of the “Parental Order” within six months of leave and pay commencing.

Note: All other details are as specified under [Section D – Adoption Leave and Pay](#) such as benefits during leave.

SECTION I – FERTILITY TREATMENT LEAVE

1. What is fertility treatment?

Infertility (unable to produce a child) is a medical condition. Establishing the cause of infertility may take many months. While there is no legal requirement for GHA to allow employees time off for fertility treatment, GHA adopts a sympathetic and open approach.

GHA recognises that employees who are undergoing infertility treatment may be required to be absent from work whilst undertaking a course of fertility treatment.

This section of the policy sets out the eligibility, qualifying criteria and application for approval of paid / unpaid leave for the purposes of fertility treatment.

2. Qualifying criteria

An employee of GHA who has 12 months continuous or more service within any of the Wheatley Group organisations, are eligible to apply for fertility treatment leave. This includes employees with same sex partners and single women.

Treatment may fall into the following categories:

- Frozen Embryo replacement (FER)
- Gamete Intra-fallopian Tube Transfer (GIFT)
- Intra – Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)
- In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)
- Zygote Intra-fallopian Tube Transfer (ZIFT)

3. Time off fertility treatment

For those who decide to undergo fertility treatment, the process involved is often time-consuming, expensive, traumatic and stressful. Many find this situation increasingly difficult to confide in their line managers and colleagues. While line managers will be expected to treat the matter with sensitivity and with the appropriate level of confidentiality, this policy aims to support employees throughout their treatment.

Employees who choose to follow a course of fertility treatment will have the right to request either of the following entitlement:

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- Females undergoing treatment: up to five working days paid leave (pro-rata for part-time / role-sharer / condensed hours) within a 12 month period to attend necessary treatment during the fertility treatment cycle.
- Partners undergoing treatment: up to two working days paid leave (pro-rata for part-time / role-share / condensed hours) within a 12 month period to cover necessary treatment and to provide support during a fertility treatment cycle.

This entitlement also includes paid time off for when the treatment has been unsuccessful.

Employees are expected, wherever possible to arrange appointments outside of their working hours, however where this is not possible, an employee may be granted paid leave as specified above. The fertility treatment paid leave can be taken to suit the needs of the employee. For example, 5 days in one block, separate days or half days.

Where a partner is not receiving treatment but would like to attend appointments with their wife or partner they would be expected to take annual leave / flexi-time / TOIL or unpaid leave. Appointments should be agreed in advance by the line manager.

It is usual for employees undergoing fertility treatment to agree a scheduled plan with the fertility clinic and this should be discussed with their line manager. It is important to note that the schedule is defined by the clinic and not the patient, as treatments have to occur at specific times.

4. Applying for fertility treatment leave

Employees should advise their line manager as soon as possible that they are undergoing treatment and wish to apply for fertility treatment leave.

Employees must complete [GHA – Notification of Leave Form](#), available on the intranet and submit to their line manager at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of treatment. Applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

On receipt of the application form, the line manager will arrange a meeting with the employee within 14 working days to determine their needs, as well as discuss the anticipated number of days away from work and any working pattern arrangements that may be required once the treatment has started.

Note: While there is no limit to the number of fertility treatments an individual may wish to request in a calendar year, the entitlement to paid leave shall not exceed 5 working days (or equivalent) within a 12 month period for female employees or 2 working days (or equivalent) within a 12 month period for partners also receiving treatment.

5. Requesting time off in excess of entitlement / unused entitlement

GHA will demonstrate a pragmatic approach to employees whose fertility treatment exceeds the five or two days for paid leave entitlement (pro-rata for part-time / role-sharer / condensed hours). In cases where an employee requires any additional time off, then alternative leave arrangements will be considered by their line manager and in advance to include annual leave / flexi-time / TOIL or unpaid leave.

GHA employees should note that any unused entitlement to paid leave for fertility treatment during a calendar year may not be carried forward and is forfeited.

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6. Postponement of fertility treatment leave

There may occasions when line managers may require an individual to postpone taking their leave for fertility treatment until a later date, for example, because of operational reasons. In the event that an application for time off is postponed to a later date, this should only be as a result of a legitimate business reason or grounds. Should this happen, the line manager will confirm to the employee a date which will be convenient for fertility treatment leave to be taken.

7. Counselling and Support

GHA appreciate that fertility treatment may be a difficult time for employees and that they may like to speak to someone in confidence. GHA offers an assistance programme – details of this service can be found on the Wheatley Group intranet.

SECTION J – REQUESTING A FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENT AND CHILDCARE SUPPORT

1. Requests for flexible working arrangements

GHA acknowledges that it can sometimes be difficult to combine work duties with personal responsibilities and in recognition of this, GHA offers flexible working arrangements and all employee's are eligible to apply. For further details on how to apply please refer to [GHA – Hours of Work, Overtime, Related Allowances and Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#). This policy is available to download from the GHA Intranet.

2. W.E Benefit – Term-time only arrangements

Wheatley Group has recently launched the W.E Benefit Scheme, which introduces term-time only arrangement to all individual's employed within any of the organisations part of the Wheatley Group.

This scheme is one of a number of flexible working arrangements / benefits that Wheatley Group is adopting, together with other provisions, committed to the principle of the right balance between an individuals' work and life commitments.

It is accepted that individuals perform best when they can balance their work responsibilities with the rest of their lives. The purpose of the scheme is focussed on improving healthy lives and making more flexible opportunities available to employees, to suit their domestic commitments.

The scheme is open to all employees. In order to make a request, please refer to the [W.E Benefit - Term-time only contract procedure guidelines](#) available to download on Wheatley Group's Intranet.

3. Childcare Vouchers

Wheatley Group offers childcare vouchers. This is a benefit available to all eligible parents who are employed by GHA. For employees within any of the organisations within the Wheatley Group they are non-taxable and exempt from National

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Insurance; for employers they bring NI savings too. Childcare vouchers are the recognised payment method for registered carers.

All eligible GHA parents with children up to 16 years old can benefit. Childcare vouchers benefit all tax-payers and offer savings of up to *£1866 (2013) a family, a year. Childcare vouchers are not just for under 5 year olds - they can be used to pay for all types of registered childcare, including day nurseries, nannies, au pairs, crèches, child-minders, out of school clubs, holiday schemes, activity clubs and qualifying childcare offered by schools.

*Figures quoted relate to the maximum family savings, if both GHA parents are Basic rate tax-payers and use childcare vouchers. If both GHA parents are Higher or Additional rate tax-payers they may save up to £1,246 a year. The savings you make will depend on your circumstances.

To register email the Employee Wellbeing Team on #Wheatley Employee Wellbeing

4. Additional Childcare Support

The launch of W.E Benefit introduces additional childcare support, to qualify you must be registered with our childcare voucher provider and are also in receipt of childcare vouchers.

You must be in receipt of childcare vouchers for a continuous period of 12 months to receive the additional £400 of vouchers from the Wheatley Group.

You will receive the additional £400 of vouchers twice a year, in March and September, into your childcare voucher account.

You can then use these vouchers for your registered childcare.

Please note: This additional £400 of vouchers will be subject to tax.

For further information on how you can benefit from the additional childcare support please refer to the [Group's Intranet – W.E Benefit Additional Childcare Support](#) or alternatively contact the Employee Wellbeing Team at #Wheatley Employee Wellbeing.
