Maternity / Adoption / Partner / Shared Parental Leave Checklist and Guidance - Line Managers

Employee Name:

Expected week of childbirth:

Leave start date:

**Before Leave**

This checklist is intended to support line managers and their staff who are taking maternity, paternity / partner, adoption, or parental leave. It is not intended as a replacement for official HR procedures so please be aware of these and ask your [HR partner](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/hr-employment-services-3031.php#panel3613) if unsure.

Everyone’s experience of leave is unique, so it’s important to be flexible and personal to your staff member. The University expects you to take a supportive and sensitive approach, and not to make any assumptions. You may also wish to discuss with your staff member when, and how, they wish to share their news.

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| **Action** | **Guidance** |  |
| Make sure your member of staff is **aware of their leave entitlements** | All the information about leave and pay can be found in the University’s leave policies:   * [maternity leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5490) * [adoption leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5493) * [paternity / partner leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5491) * [shared parental leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5492) * and [parental leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5495).   The [Parents' Guidebook](https://view.pagetiger.com/athenaswan-parents-guidebook/athenaswan) takes you through our Family Friendly Policies and the support available on campus at all stages of the process. |  |
| Carry out a **risk assessment** as soon as possible to make sure your staff member is working safely during pregnancy (if applicable). | Review your staff member’s work activities and seek advice from your School / Area Health & Safety Adviser or [HR partner](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/hr-employment-services-3031.php) if required.  A [New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Form and Guidance](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/resources-5988.php#panel17901) is available from the Health & Safety department. Risk assessments may need to be changed throughout pregnancy. It is recommended to revisit this risk assessment at least once during your staff member’s pregnancy to ensure that there is nothing to add or remove. |  |
| **Check in on your staff member** during their pregnancy (if applicable). | Make your staff member aware that they can contact [the HR department](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/hr-employment-services-3031.php) at any point if they have any questions about the leave process.  It is also important to check in with your staff member throughout their pregnancy if anything has changed. If necessary, you may want to schedule check in meetings with your staff member to discuss these changes, or you could simply make it clear that you are open and supportive. |  |
| **Notification** | Ask your member of staff to [notify you and your local HR team in writing of the pregnancy, adoption, and/or leave](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php). They need to confirm due date (if applicable), when they would like their leave to start, and payment option. |  |
| **Antenatal care** | Provision for reasonable paid time off during working hours for antenatal care and adoption appointments is outlined in the [leave policies](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5493). |  |
| **Annual leave** | Remember that members of staff continue to accrue annual leave during maternity/birth parent/adoption and shared parental leave periods. Discuss taking any outstanding leave before their leave commences and consider how accrued leave might be taken before returning to work, if desired. Accrued leave could be taken as a block at the end of leave or used to help your staff member settle back into work gradually. |  |
| **Thinking about childcare** | Parents say that it is common for spots at nursery to fill up very quickly and for there to be a waitlist at nursery. Make your staff member aware of this advice and to encourage them to begin considering their childcare options.  [Rocking Horse Nursery](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/campus/rocking-horse-nursery-1804.php) is located at the University of Aberdeen and may be an option for new parents. |  |
| Agree **how you will communicate** while your staff members is on leave | Discuss with your staff member how they would like to be communicated with while they are on leave.  **[Keeping in touch (KIT) and Shared Parental Leave in Touch](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php)**  **[(SPLIT) days](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php)** are a way of working during maternity, adoption or shared parental leave without leave or pay coming to an end. They are optional and can be used to benefit your staff member’s career or to help them settle back into work. Now is a good time to discuss how best to use them for your staff member’s career requirements (e.g., go to a conference, attend staff training, catch up with PhD students – etc.). The [KIT / SPLIT form](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php) is to be completed before KIT or SPLIT days are taken.  These days are paid but cannot be claimed retrospectively and must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. There is no pay in lieu of KIT / SPLIT days and any days not taken will be lost. Refer to the relevant the [leave policies](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php) for more information. |  |
| **Arranging Cover** | **Consider if the post needs to be / can be covered** during the leave period. Otherwise/in addition, agree which elements of work need to continue in your staff member’s absence and how these will be covered. To request cover for periods of maternity leave please complete the [Maternity/Birth Parent Fund application form](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/recruitment-selection-3988.php#panel3811).  For Schools, you may also want to contact your School Administration Manager to discuss next steps and to plan for a handover of tasks during the leave period so the staff member is also kept aware.  Individuals returning from maternity, or paternity / partner, adoption, or other relevant parental leave (3 months or more) may sometimes be given a reduced teaching and administrative load to facilitate re-acclimation – speak to your School Administration Manager to find out about practice in the School. |  |
| **Out of office** | Previous parents have stressed the importance of an out of office message during leave so that your staff member does not feel undue workload pressure. It also helps normalise the taking of leave for others. This is something the staff member can set up themselves and it would be good practice to include alternative contacts. |  |

**During Leave**

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| **Action** | **Guidance** |  |
| **Contact** | Maintain contact with your member of staff as agreed. It is also important to advise your staff member of any vacancies that may become available in the school and any key changes that might impact on them on their return, unless they have explicitly asked for no contact. |  |
| **KIT / SPLIT days** | Remember the member of staff may use [KIT or SPLIT days](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php) – as detailed above. |  |
| **Planning the return to work** | Plans for the return to work, e.g. breastfeeding arrangements, risk assessments  (if applicable), re-induction, office arrangements, workload, additional support,  potential training requirements etc should be discussed.  Return from maternity leave: see [section 4.4 Returning to Work Guidance](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-6719.php#panel5490) of the Maternity / Birth parent leave procedure.  Should a member of staff wish to return from leave earlier than planned, then they must contact the Line Manager who can then discuss further with HR.  If flexible working arrangements are being considered, adequate time should be allowed for discussion between the employee and the manager and for  submission of the appropriate paperwork prior to any return. |  |
| **Returning To Work** | | |
| **Action** | **Guidance** |  |
| **Arranging return-to-work meeting** | Arrange a meeting to agree with your staff member how they will be reintroduced to their work. Make sure they are aware of any administrative or organisational changes that have taken place in their absence.  Please make a note of any changes in the School as they happen, to better brief your staff member upon their return.  The [staff newsletter](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/staff-newsletter-9165.php) is also a good place to direct your staff member should they have questions about changes at the University.  You can also suggest to the staff member that they take some time now to read the staff meeting minutes to keep up to date with changes, where available.  It is prudent that the return to work planning meeting is flexible. Ask your staff member if they would prefer to hold this meeting prior to their return (using a **KIT or SPLIT day**) or just after their return.  Regular ‘check-in’ meetings, between the employee and manager, should be  considered to ensure the return to work is fully supported. Any flexible working arrangements or other changes/adjustments should be reviewed, if appropriate, to ensure their effectiveness. |  |
| **Workload** | If applicable, it is worth re-orienting your staff member with their teaching and so on in case of any changes since they went on leave. |  |
| **Expressing or breastfeeding** | The University is a Breastfeeding Friendly Space and breastfeeding is welcomed in public areas. There are [several private spaces available also](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/inclusive-facilities--13357.php#panel13361).).  It is also a [legal requirement](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/b/s/Acas-guide-on-%20accommodating-breastfeeding-in-the-workplace.pdf) for the University to support mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding after they have returned to work.  If the staff member needs breastfeeding equipment (e.g. fridge) then they can contact the School Health and Safety Lead and/or speak to HR. |  |
| Support your staff member to rebuild their networks and make them aware of **mentoring /**  **coaching opportunities**. | The University of Aberdeen defines mentoring in the following way: *“Mentoring is about one person, usually more experienced, helping another to make continuous improvements in skills, knowledge, work or thinking, outside the normal line management relationship.”*  A mentor can help you reflect on your current and future career and provide some signposting and guidance.  The University has many [mentoring/coaching opportunities](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/staff-development-111.php). Your staff member can also specifically request guidance related to being a parent.  Many staff belong to [university-wide community networks](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/Staff-equality-networks-and-committees.php.) (e.g., Parents and Carers Network, Women’s Development) |  |
| Familiarise yourself with relevant policies. | **Flexible Working**  Your staff member may wish to return to work on a part-time basis or with a [flexible working arrangement](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/leave-and-absence-183.php).  **Information for parents**  The University has a [guidebook for new and continuing parents](https://sway.cloud.microsoft/VdNVGDTRT68hXemy?ref=Link). |  |
| Remind your staff member of the resources available to them. | It important that your staff member is aware of the [wellbeing support](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/wellbeing-portal/physicalhealth-10503.php) available to them through the University of Aberdeen.  There are many other resources related to being a new parent while also working in academia recommended by staff in the School. Let your staff member know about these resources (for example): <https://mamaisanacademic.wordpress.com/resources/> |  |