

Shared Parental Leave and Pay Guide for Employees and Managers

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Shared Parental Leave and Pay – Guide for Employees and Managers

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1. Introduction

The arrangements for Shared Parental Leave and Pay are designed to provide the opportunity for new parents and adopters to plan for the shared care of their child with greater flexibility.

This guide for employees and managers is intended to provide basic information in a straightforward way that will be helpful to those considering Shared Parental Leave. The legislation is quite complicated and this guide does not intend to cover every eventuality. However, if you do have further questions after reading this and the accompanying Frequently Asked Questions, please talk in the first place to your regular HR team contacts.

This new piece of legislation also sits alongside existing pieces of legislation and employees and managers will need to be clear how they connect. A good rule-of-thumb is that other entitlements remain unchanged (for example, maternity, paternity or adoption leave) except for Additional Paternity Leave, which has been abolished.

As we gather more experience across Queen Mary of implementing these arrangements, we will update this guide. If you have any particular feedback then please direct it to your regular HR team contacts who will be pleased to receive it and incorporate it into subsequent editions.

Margaret Ayers
Human Resources Director
March 2015

This document does not form part of any contract of employment and may be amended from time to time as we learn from our experience as well as in line with future legislative change.

2. What the words mean

- 2.1 Shared Parental Leave can be taken by married couples, civil partnership couples, same-sex, same-gender and heterosexual couples, separated parents sharing care, couples in some surrogacy arrangements, and prospective adopters. Queen Mary is committed to ensuring our policies are inclusive and therefore we will use gender neutral language throughout this policy. For ease, however, the following terminology is used throughout this document.

Birth Parent/Primary Adopter refers to the pregnant employee or person who has given birth or the adoptive parent who intends to take adoption leave.

Partner refers to the other biological parent of the child or the secondary adopter, or the person who, at the date of the child's birth or adoption, is married to, is the civil partner of, or the partner of the birth parent/primary adopter. This includes someone, of any gender, who lives with the birth parent/primary adopter and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the birth parent's/primary adopter's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling or extended family.

Maternity Leave: maternity leave or adoption leave.

Maternity Pay: maternity pay or adoption pay.

Expected Week of Childbirth: either the expected week of childbirth or date of placement of adopted child.

Employee working for Queen Mary: this term covers people on the following types of contract:

- ❖ permanent (full-time or part-time)
- ❖ fixed term

It does not cover:

- ❖ agency workers
- ❖ self-employed contractors

Manager: the line manager of the Queen Mary employee.

Department: the part of Queen Mary to which the employee belongs. This includes Schools and Institutes.

Employee Guide to Shared Parental Leave

3. What is Shared Parental Leave?

- 3.1 As a Queen Mary employee and a new or expecting parent, you may share a period of leave and pay with your partner during the child's first year. This provision came into effect for babies due on or after 5 April 2015, or for children placed for adoption on or after that date.

4. How much Shared Parental Leave can you take?

- 4.1 **If you are the birth parent/primary adopter and a Queen Mary employee**, you must take the first two weeks following the birth/placement of your child as compulsory maternity/adoption leave. After this, you may choose to end your maternity/adoption leave and associated pay, and you and your partner may split the remainder of the statutory 52 week maternity/adoption leave entitlement and 39 weeks maternity/adoption pay entitlement. Therefore, you may share up to 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave and up to 37 weeks' Shared Parental Pay. You may only share your leave with one other person.
- 4.2 **If you are the partner and a Queen Mary employee**, the birth parent/primary adopter may choose to end their maternity/adoption leave early and share up to 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave, and up to 37 weeks' Shared Parental Pay.
- 4.3 You can stop and start your Shared Parental Leave and return to work between periods of leave. You and your partner may take Shared Parental Leave in turn, in different blocks or at the same time. Shared Parental Leave must be taken in blocks of complete weeks. The minimum period of Shared Parental Leave is one week.
- 4.4 You remain entitled to take ordinary and additional maternity leave, ordinary paternity leave or adoption leave, as well as unpaid parental leave. However, additional paternity leave was abolished with effect from 5 April 2015.

5. Who can take Shared Parental Leave?

- 5.1 **If you are the birth parent/primary adopter and a Queen Mary employee, you must:**
- Have a partner, with whom you have main responsibility for the care of your child at the date of birth/adoption.
 - Have 26 weeks' continuous service at Queen Mary by the end of the 15th Week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.
 - Remain in continuous employment with Queen Mary until the week before any period of Shared Parental Leave.
 - Be entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave/Pay or Maternity Allowance in relation to the child and end this entitlement (see Queen Mary's Employee Guide to Maternity at: <http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/leave/maternity/index>).
 - Comply with the relevant notice and evidence requirements (outlined below).

5.2 If you are the partner and a Queen Mary employee, you must:

- a. Have a partner, with whom you have main responsibility for the care of your child at the date of birth/adoption.
- b. Have 26 weeks' continuous service at Queen Mary by the end of the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.
- c. Remain in continuous employment with Queen Mary until the week before any period of Shared Parental Leave.
- d. Comply with the relevant notice and evidence requirements (outlined below).

5.3 In addition:

Where one parent is employed by Queen Mary, then the other parent must also meet certain requirements (whether they are also employed at Queen Mary, or by another organisation, or self-employed or unemployed):

- a. Have main responsibility (with you) for the care of the child at the date of birth/adoption.
- b. Meet the “*employment and earnings*” test:
 - ❖ Have been engaged in employment (or self-employed) for 26 weeks in the 66 weeks preceding the Expected Week of Childbirth.
 - ❖ Have had average weekly earnings above the maternity allowance threshold in any 13 of these 66 weeks (<https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance>).

6. What do you need to do?

6.1. **Understand** whether you and your partner are both entitled to Shared Parental Leave and Shared Parental Pay, or whether just one of you, or neither of you. The following steps assume that at least one of you is entitled to Shared Parental Leave.

6.2. **Decide** what arrangements will best suit your particular circumstances in terms of sharing the care for your child. Questions you may want to ask yourselves are:

- a. Is the birth parent/primary adopter reducing their maternity/adoption leave?
- b. What will be the financial impact for you?
- c. What will be the impact for you each in terms of your work, and any particular projects you are or might be involved in?
- d. How might Shared Parental Leave work for you with or alongside other arrangements you may have in place or that may be possible, such as flexible working and annual leave?
- e. What sort of pattern of sharing care will best suit you?
- f. What will be the impact of the arrangements you have in mind on your pension? On the same basis as for Maternity/Adoption Leave, an employee will find that during their period of nil pay, pension contributions will cease, although they will have the opportunity to make top-up contributions after their return to work.

6.3. **Discuss** with your manager who will welcome an early conversation with you. Whilst you are only required to give notification (described in the next step), a conversation with your manager (particularly if you and your partner are having conversations with separate employers) helps to understand what options are available and what considerations your manager may have in mind.

6.4 **Notify** your manager. There are 3 stages to notifying your manager:

- a. **End** Maternity/Adoption Leave. Shared Parental Leave can only be taken once Maternity/Adoption Leave is ended, so if you are the birth parent/primary adopter and an employee of Queen Mary, you will need to tell us you intend to end your Maternity/Adoption Leave (sometimes called the curtailment notice). You need to give eight weeks' notice of the ending of your Maternity/Adoption Leave and make sure for the birth parent you have had the two weeks of compulsory maternity leave following the birth of your child.
- b. **Notify**. Provide your manager with a notice of entitlement and intention to take Shared Parental Leave (sometimes called the opt-in notice) at the same time as you tell them of your plan to end Maternity/Adoption Leave. You can get a form from HR. You will need to give information about (using the example of the birth parent being the Queen Mary employee):
 - i. **Birth parent**: your name; the start and end date of your maternity leave; and a signed declaration that:
 - ❖ you will be sharing responsibility for the care of the child
 - ❖ you have given notice to end your maternity entitlement
 - ❖ you meet the continuity of employment test
 - ❖ the information you have given is accurate
 - ❖ should you cease to be eligible you will immediately inform Queen Mary
 - ii. **Partner**: your partner must also provide Queen Mary with a signed declaration stating:
 - ❖ their name, address and national insurance number
 - ❖ they are the parent of the child or partner of the birth parent
 - ❖ they meet the criteria for the employment and earnings test
 - ❖ that at the time of the birth or placement they share the responsibility for the care of the child with the employee seeking to take Shared Parental Leave
 - ❖ they consent to the amount of leave and pay that the employee is seeking to take
 - ❖ they consent to Queen Mary receiving this declaration to process the information contained within it
 - ❖ that they will immediately inform their partner should they cease to satisfy the eligibility conditions.
 - iii. **Both of you**: the total amount of Shared Parental Leave available to you (you calculate this on the basis of 52 weeks less the amount of Maternity/Adoption Leave taken); how much Shared Parental Leave the birth parent and partner intend to take; an indication of when they intend to take Shared Parental Leave:
 - ❖ at least one parent must book a period of Shared Parental Leave at the same time as submitting their notice of entitlement

- iv. **Your child:** their expected week of birth, actual date of birth or date of adoption placement.
- c. **Book** Shared Parental Leave. When booking, remember it can:
 - i. start on any day of the week
 - ii. only be taken in complete weeks (so if Shared Parental Leave lasts for one week and begins on a Tuesday it will finish on the following Monday)
 - iii. be taken using up to three separate notices to book leave.
 - iv. not be mixed up with Annual Leave. For example, a sequence of Shared Parental Leave immediately followed by Annual Leave, immediately followed by more Shared Parental Leave would generally not be accepted.

Make sure you understand the difference between booking continuous and discontinuous blocks of time.

- i. **Continuous.** This is an unbroken period of time in a single notice, for example, a period of six weeks. If you notify your manager of a continuous block, then they must accept this.
- ii. **Discontinuous.** This is where, in a single notice, you notify your manager that you plan a period of leave, then a period back at work, followed by another period of leave: 4 weeks off / 4 weeks on / 4 weeks off, for example. If you do this, your manager does not have to accept it. Using this example, if you absolutely needed to secure those two periods of 4 weeks as leave, you could do so by providing a separate notice for each of them. In this case, they would each represent a continuous block and your manager would have to accept them. Remember however, that you would have used two of your three allowable booking notices.

6.5 **Response.** What will you hear back from your manager?

- a. **Acceptance.** Your manager has to accept a notification for a continuous block of Shared Parental Leave. They do not have to accept a discontinuous block, but may do so.
- b. **Modification.** Where you have requested a discontinuous block, your manager may ask you to modify this. You will need to discuss this with them (as well as with your partner) to see if you can reach a conclusion that works for all sides.
- c. **No response.** If you do not hear anything back from your manager, check that they received your request. If no agreement is reached regarding a discontinuous leave request during a 14 calendar day discussion period or no response is given, then the leave will default to a single continuous block that adds up to the total that you requested in separate parts. You will then have to decide whether to take the leave as a continuous block or to withdraw the request. If you decide to withdraw your request, this will not count towards one of your three booking notices. If you opt for continuous leave you can choose when it will commence but this cannot be sooner than eight weeks from the date the original notification was given. If you do not choose, the start

date automatically defaults to the date the requested discontinuous leave would have first started.

6.6 **Changes.** What if you change your mind?

- a. Once the birth parent/primary adopter has given notice to end maternity/adoption leave and either parent has informed their employer of their entitlement to take Shared Parental Leave then you are bound by the notice to end maternity/adoption leave and cannot withdraw it unless:
 - i. within eight weeks of the birth parent/primary adopter submitting notice to end their maternity/adoption leave it emerges that neither parent qualifies for Shared Parental Leave. In this case Shared Parental Leave becomes invalid and the birth parent/primary adopter will revert to Maternity Leave/Adoption Leave.
 - ii. when notice was given before birth, it may be withdrawn without a reason up to six weeks following the birth/child's placement.
 - iii. the partner dies.
- b. If there is a joint entitlement to Shared Parental Leave, parents will have notified their respective employers of how much leave they each intend to take as part of the entitlement notice. They can vary this allocation of leave between them at any stage as long as it has not yet been booked. To vary this, both parents must notify each employer in writing of the following:
 - i. details of their original division of leave
 - ii. advising of the fact they are changing it
 - iii. advising how they now intend to take the available Shared Parental Leave. As before, you will need to give eight weeks' notice.
- c. Both parents must sign the notice to confirm that they are in agreement with the variation. If leave was booked but will no longer take place, a notice to vary leave must also be made. If you withdraw this before it has been agreed, it will not count towards one of your three booking notices, but once agreed it will. If you have already used up all of your notifications, your manager is under no obligation to agree to vary/cancel the leave but could still consider the request and decide whether it is reasonably practicable to grant it.

6.7 **Dates change.** In the circumstances that a baby arrives early or late, then you may vary the arrangements agreed for Shared Parental Leave either backwards or forwards in line with the difference in actual date from the planned date.

6.8 **On leave.** Whilst you are on leave:

- a. You may take up to 20 Shared Parental Leave In-Touch (SPLIT) days, agreeing the number and dates with your manager. Queen Mary will pay a full day's pay for each of these SPLIT days, in line with the payment for maternity Keeping In-Touch days. You need to agree the dates with your manager. These are in addition to the 10 maternity-related Keeping-In-Touch days.
- b. Both partners may have the 20 days, each from their respective employers, regardless of the duration of their Shared Parental Leave. If you both work for Queen Mary, you may each have 20 days.
- c. You will continue to accrue Annual Leave. Where your period of Shared Parental Leave crosses over two leave years, then the untaken leave will also carry across, as it currently does for Maternity Leave.

- 6.9 **Return to work.** Return to work from Shared Parental Leave is similar to the return from Maternity Leave/Adoption Leave. Both you and your manager are encouraged to plan the approach of the return to best enable you to transition back into work.

If you return to work immediately after a period of Shared Parental Leave which, together with any period of maternity / adoption leave was 26 weeks or less, you are entitled to return to the same job. If the period of Shared Parental Leave and maternity / adoption leave was greater than 26 weeks, they may return to the same job or another suitable job on comparable terms and conditions.

In the event that your employment ends with Queen Mary for whatever reason during a period of shared parental leave, you may still be eligible to receive Statutory Shared Parental Pay, assuming you have met the eligibility criteria. You will not, however, be eligible for Enhanced Shared Parental Pay under Queen Mary's enhanced scheme once you have left Queen Mary's employment.

- 6.10 **Special Circumstances.** Sometimes particular unforeseen circumstances will arise which may vary some of the above approach. If you believe that this has happened in your case, please contact your regular HR team contact. These circumstances may include a miscarriage or stillbirth, the death of the child, or the death of a partner.

Employee Guide to Shared Parental Pay

7. Who is entitled to Shared Parental pay?

- 7.1 **If you are the birth parent/primary adopter and a Queen Mary employee:** You will still be entitled to ordinary and additional maternity leave or adoption leave and Queen Mary enhanced maternity/adoption pay or statutory maternity/adoption pay, provided you meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Queen Mary Employee Guide to Maternity Leave (<http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/leave/maternity/index.html>).

You may choose to take maternity/adoption leave and pay, or you may curtail your maternity/adoption (leave and) pay and opt to convert your maternity/adoption pay to Shared Parental Pay instead, which you will share with your partner. To do this, you must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the table below.

- 7.2 **If you are the partner and a Queen Mary employee:** You will still be entitled to ordinary paternity leave and Queen Mary enhanced paternity pay or statutory paternity pay, provided you meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Queen Mary Employee Guide to Paternity Leave (link as above).

You may choose to take ordinary paternity leave and pay and / or provided the birth parent/primary adopter has ended their maternity/adoption leave, you may agree to convert any remaining entitlement to Shared Parental Leave which you will share. To do this, you must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the table below.

8. What is the rate of pay?

- 8.1 Shared Parental Pay is paid for a maximum of 37 weeks. Effectively, this is 39 weeks' Statutory Maternity Pay or Statutory Adoption Pay minus 2 weeks' compulsory maternity leave/adoption leave.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay is paid at the same rate as Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay. This is determined by the government on an annual basis. The current rate of Statutory Shared Parental Pay can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/what-youll-get>

Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay is paid at the same rate as Queen Mary's Enhanced Maternity Pay (with a two week deduction of full pay as a result of compulsory maternity leave).

- 8.2 The table below compares the requirements and entitlements of the Statutory Shared Parental Pay Scheme and the Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay Scheme:

	Statutory Scheme	Queen Mary Enhanced Scheme
Requirements	<p>To qualify for Statutory Shared Parental Pay, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Have 26 weeks' continuous service at Queen Mary by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth/placement for adoption ❖ Remain in continuous employment with Queen Mary until the week before any period of Shared Parental Leave ❖ Have a partner who meets the 'employment and earnings test' ❖ Have earned above the 'Lower Earnings Limit' in the eight weeks leading up to the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth 	<p>To qualify for Statutory Shared Parental Pay, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Have one year's continuous service at Queen Mary ❖ Remain in continuous employment with Queen Mary until the week before any period of Shared Parental Leave ❖ Have a partner who meets the 'employment and earnings test' ❖ Have earned above the 'Lower Earnings Limit' in the eight weeks leading up to the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth ❖ Return to work for at least three months after your Shared Parental Leave ends
Entitlement	<p>If you meet the criteria above, you are entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The standard weekly rate of Shared Parental Pay determined by the government, or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower 	<p>If you meet the criteria above, you are entitled to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 16 weeks at full pay ❖ 8 weeks at half pay ❖ 13 weeks at Statutory Shared Parental Pay ❖ 13 weeks at nil pay

- 8.3 Shared Parental Pay is paid to you by Queen Mary. Queen Mary does not pay Shared Parental Pay to the other parent, unless they are also employed by Queen Mary and meet the eligibility requirements.

The other parent must follow their own employer's Shared Parental Leave Policy in order to determine their eligibility and entitlement to Shared Parental Leave.

The amount of Shared Parental Pay payable to which the birth parent/primary adopter or partner is entitled is not in addition to statutory/Queen Mary Enhanced Maternity/Adoption Pay. The amount of Shared Parental Pay, both statutory and enhanced under the Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay Scheme, will be reduced by the amount of statutory or enhanced maternity pay that has already been paid. If, for example, the birth parent takes 16 weeks' maternity leave before converting the maternity leave to Shared Parental Leave, the amount of Shared Parental Pay remaining is 21 weeks, comprising 8 weeks at half pay and 13 weeks at Statutory Shared Parental Pay.

Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay includes statutory Shared Parental Pay and the birth parent or partner will not be entitled to the Enhanced Shared Parental Pay in addition to statutory Shared Parental Pay.

The Lower Earnings Limit is set by the government and is the amount of gross weekly earnings which allows an employee to qualify for certain state benefits. The current Lower Earnings Limit can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/rates-and-thresholds-for-employers-2015-to-2016>

9. Illustrations

9.1 Scenario 1

A birth parent has been employed continuously at Queen Mary for two years and intends to return to work following Shared Parental Leave. They have taken four weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave and now want to take Shared Parental Leave with their partner. Their partner is employed by another organisation and meets the employment and earnings test.

By ending their maternity leave, the birth parent is entitled to share up to 48 weeks' Shared Parental Leave with their partner. They choose to take 15 weeks' Shared Parental Leave as a continuous period and their partner takes the remaining 33 weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

The birth parent will have been paid for four weeks' at full pay under Queen Mary's Enhanced Maternity policy. Therefore, their Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay for the subsequent 15 weeks will be as follows:

- ❖ 14 weeks at full pay
- ❖ 1 week at half pay

Their partner will be paid for the remaining 33 weeks' by their own employer according to their Shared Parental Leave policy.

9.2 Scenario 2

A partner has been employed continuously at Queen Mary for eight months. Their partner who is the birth parent is employed by another organisation and meets the employment and earnings test. They wish to end their maternity leave early so that they and their partner may take 20 weeks' Shared Parental Leave concurrently.

The birth parent must take two weeks' compulsory maternity leave, after which they may end their maternity leave and convert 20 weeks to Shared Parental Leave. They will be paid by their own employer according to their policy.

The partner employed by Queen does not have one year's continuous service. Therefore, they may take 20 weeks' Shared Parental Leave at the Statutory Shared Parental Pay rate.

9.3 Scenario 3

A partner has been employed continuously at Queen Mary for 5 years and intends to return to work following Shared Parental Leave. The birth parent is currently unemployed but meets the employment and earnings test.

The birth parent is not entitled to Shared Parental Leave as they are not employed. However, the partner may take Shared Parental Leave as the birth parent meets the employment and earnings test.

The partner gives notice to take sixteen weeks' Shared Parental Leave as a continuous period following two weeks Ordinary Paternity Leave after the birth of the child. Queen Mary is obliged to authorise the sixteen weeks' Shared Parental Leave and the partner is entitled to full Enhanced Shared Parental Pay during this period.

After returning to work, the partner gives eight weeks' notice to take a further four weeks' Shared Parental Leave, but on a discontinuous basis. Specifically, taking two weeks' Shared Parental Leave, returning to work for four weeks, and then taking the further two weeks' Shared Parental Leave. This work pattern is agreed by the employee's manager. The partner's pay entitlement from the child's date of birth will therefore be:

Weeks	Activity	Pay
1 -2	Ordinary Paternity leave	Full Pay (QMUL Enhanced Paternity Pay)
3 -18	Shared Parental Leave	Full Pay (QMUL Enhanced Shared Parental Pay)
19 - 26	At work	Full Pay (Salary)
27 - 29	Shared Parental Leave	Half Pay (QMUL Enhanced Shared Parental Pay)
30 - 34	At work	Full Pay (Salary)
35 - 37	Shared Parental Leave	Half Pay (QMUL Enhanced Shared Parental Pay)

9.4 Scenario 4

The primary adopter of a child has been employed continuously by Queen Mary for one year and would like to end their adoption leave after three weeks in order to take Shared Parental Leave. Their partner is employed by another organisation and meets the employment and earnings test.

The primary adopter gives notice to take 45 weeks' Shared Parental Leave as a continuous period. Queen Mary is obliged to approve this request.

The primary adopter will be entitled to the Queen Mary Enhanced Shared Parental Pay as follows:

- ❖ 15 weeks at full pay
- ❖ 8 weeks at half pay
- ❖ 13 weeks' Statutory Shared Parental Pay
- ❖ 13 weeks' nil pay

A Manager's Guide

10. When you first hear

10.1 This is a legal entitlement for employees who are eligible, and this consideration should inform your actions. When a member of your staff first makes you aware that they believe they are entitled to Shared Parental Leave and propose to use it, you may request an informal discussion to hear plans and have the opportunity to make suggestions from your side, indicate where you might have difficulties and, if they are considering discontinuous leave, what would be acceptable to you. Clearly your side of the conversation will be informed by your assessment of the impact of their absence on your department and therefore you might need some time to consider this. Having, therefore, a couple of informal discussions may work well for you.

11. When you are notified

11.1 For the details of the employee's notification requirements, see the section 4 above of the employee guide on page 6. When reviewing documentation, note:

- a. If it is for a **continuous block** (an unbroken period of leave contained within a single notice): you cannot refuse this.
- b. If it is for a **discontinuous block** (a broken period of leave contained within a single notice): then you may refuse this. To keep the conversation positive, however, accompany any refusal with constructive suggestions about a pattern of leave that would work well for your department.

11.2 Above all, do make sure that you give a response within 14 days. Where you fail to do this in the case of a discontinuous block request, your member of staff becomes entitled to the total duration of the requested leave as a single continuous block which can start eight weeks on from the request.

12. If your member of staff changes their mind

12.1 Your member of staff, within their allocated three notices, may request a variation of a previously planned period of leave. Again, in the case of a continuous block, you are obliged to accept this. Where it is a discontinuous block, you have the right to refuse it and, where you do, should propose an alternative pattern with a view to reaching a conclusion acceptable to you both.

13. During their leave

13.1 Your member of staff may have up to 20 Shared Parental Leave In-Touch days. They should agree the number and dates for these with you. It would be helpful to agree with them how to use these productively. Some managers use them as a way to provide a phased return to full working (which may suit the employee, particularly if they are occurring during the Shared Parental Leave period of nil pay), or as a way to trial flexible working. You may want to link them with particular phases of a project.

Whilst they are away, alongside the SPLIT days, you will also want to keep in touch in more informal ways – a phone call or brief visit. As the manager you are free to make reasonable contact which can be beneficial to both yourself and your team member.

13.2 Towards the end of their leave, you should plan with them their return. They are entitled, in general, to return to the role they left, as with Maternity/Adoption Leave. Planning for this return will very much depend on local circumstances, but managers should be sensitive, for example, to the sorts of information that the member of staff will not have as a result of their absence, that will help them back to full productivity as quickly as possible

14. Liaising with HR

14.1 In managing Shared Parental Leave, the respective roles of Department managers and HR are broadly similar to instances of Maternity/Adoption Leave:

- a. The manager remains the manager of the person and should be their main point of contact during their absence.
- b. HR will provide advice to managers and to employees
- c. In relation to documents, employees access them from the HR web pages, they are signed off by their manager who then forwards them to HR.
- d. HR will confirm details in writing to employees and will liaise with Payroll for pay adjustments.