

ETHICS, ETHOS & BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

4. Family Friendly

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It is the policy of McFT to ensure that, as far as possible, you are able to combine your career and family responsibilities. We recognise that families bring additional responsibilities therefore, we have set out our policies for complying with this and allowing you your full rights. The family-friendly policies set out the rules relating to:

- a) Maternity Leave
- b) Adoption Leave
- c) Paternity Leave
- d) Parental Leave
- e) Time off for dependents
- f) Flexible Working

a) Maternity Leave Policy

We value the contributions of our female staff and every effort is made to encourage women to return to work from maternity leave. This policy applies to all employees, full-time and part-time. We also recognise that arrangements for cover during the period of maternity leave and additional leave, as well as arrangement for communication during maternity leave, are important for ensuring smooth transitions at every stage.

Maternity Leave

When you receive medical confirmation that you are pregnant, you should notify your line manager of the expected week of childbirth (EWC) and the date on which you want or expect to commence maternity leave (which must not be a date earlier than the beginning of 11th week before the EWC). If requested to do so, you should provide a medical certificate confirming the EWC.

As soon as practicable after the notification of your pregnancy, arrangements will be made for you to meet with the HR Manager. This will be an informal interview, the purpose of which is to ensure that:

- You understand your right to statutory maternity leave (SML) and Shared Parental Leave (SPL) including the requirements for you to give appropriate notices.
- The right to return is explained.
- Arrangements for time off are known, and any possible health and safety concerns are aired.
- You know your entitlements to payment during maternity leave.

We recognise that arrangements for cover during the period of maternity leave and additional leave and also for enabling you to keep in touch with any developments at work are important for ensuring smooth transitions at each stage. Accordingly, prior to commencement of maternity leave you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and also for providing you with opportunities to remain in contact whilst you are on leave. As far as possible, such arrangements will be finalised in consultation with you. If you have staff reporting to you, we will endeavour to ensure you are involved in all decisions relating to the temporary reporting arrangements to cover your maternity leave.

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In addition, you will usually remain on circulation lists for internal memoranda and other documents, and will be included in invitations to work-related social events as though you were still at work. We aim to ensure that maternity leave does not cause you any long-term disadvantage in relation to your training needs and/or self-development.

You have the right to return to your own job on the same benefits, terms and conditions if you return during the first 26 weeks of SML. If you return after your first 26 weeks SML, you are entitled to return to the same job or one with no less favourable terms and conditions if it is not practicable to return to your former job. In accordance with statutory requirements, where job losses are unavoidable, you will be given first consideration for any suitable alternative employment that may arise and will not be subjected to any disadvantage due to your maternity leave.

At least two weeks before you are due to return to work, you may be invited for an informal meeting with your line Manager or HR Manager in order to provide an opportunity for discussion of any material points concerning your return to work. These include:

- Updating you on developments at work.
- Considering whether any retraining needs have arisen, due to time out of the organisation or new technical or other developments; it is our aim to ensure that your maternity leave does not put you at a disadvantage in relation to skills or development.
- Providing you with the opportunity of indicating whether you wish to be considered for flexible working.

The interview will also provide an opportunity to discuss and explain any necessary and unavoidable changes to your work.

The opportunities for flexible working will depend on the needs of the business, but we recognise that many women will be interested in reducing their working hours or working at home for a while after their return from maternity leave. We will make every effort to accommodate requests for part-time working, provided that your duties can still be effectively carried out on such a basis. You should be aware that if you worked full-time prior to your maternity leave you have no automatic right to return to work on a part-time basis or to make other changes to your working patterns. Any request for a contract variation should be made under the Flexible Working Policy.

The following sets out McFT's policy on maternity leave, maternity pay and all other issues relating to pregnancy and maternity. The policy is designed to be as comprehensive as possible. However, if you have any queries which are not answered or if you have any other questions about the policy, please contact the HR Manager.

Time Off for Ante-Natal Care

You are entitled to take time off during your normal working hours to receive ante-natal care, although whenever it is possible to do so you should arrange your appointments at the start or end of your working day. Ante-natal care includes appointments with your GP, hospital clinics and relaxation classes. You may be required to produce an appointment card or some other document confirming all appointments other than the first one. You should advise your line manager that you will be absent as far in advance of the appointment as possible.

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There will be no deduction from your salary for attendance at authorised ante-natal appointments, including any time spent travelling to and waiting for the appointment.

Statutory Maternity Leave

You are entitled to take 52 weeks' maternity leave, irrespective of your length of service or the number of hours worked each week, provided they comply with certain notification requirements (see below).

Compulsory Maternity Leave

Legislation prohibits you from returning to work during the two week period immediately after the birth of your child.

When Your Maternity Leave Starts

You can choose when to start your maternity leave at any time after the start of the 11th week before the week in which your child is due, up until the birth of your child. The only exception to this is if you are absent from work wholly or partly because of your pregnancy at any time after the start of the fourth week before your child is due. In this case McFT reserves the right to require you to start your maternity leave on the first day after your absence.

If you have properly notified McFT (see Notification Requirements below) of the date on which you wish to start your maternity leave, you may vary that date provided you notify, in writing, the HR Manager of the variation at least 28 days before the date varied of 28 days before the new date, whichever is the earlier.

Notification Requirements

No later than the end of the 15th week before the EWC you must give notice in writing to the HR Manager (form FRM-MAT can be used for these purposes). This notice must state

- That you are pregnant.
- The week in which your child is due (note that for these purposes a week begins on a Sunday).
- When you want your maternity leave to start; this date cannot be earlier than the 11th week before the EWC.

You should enclose a Form MAT B1 signed by your GP or midwife with your written notification, which confirms the EWC.

As stated above, if you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy on the first day after the beginning of the fourth week before the EWC, your maternity leave will start the following day. As such, you do not need to notify the HR Manager that you intend maternity leave to start, but you will not be entitled to statutory maternity leave unless you have notified the HR Manager as soon as is reasonably practicable that you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy and of the date on which your absence on that account began. Such notification must be in writing.

Similarly, if you give birth before your statutory maternity leave has started, your statutory maternity leave period will begin on the day that follows the day on which childbirth occurred. Again, in such circumstances you do not need to notify the HR Manager of the date on which you intend to start ordinary maternity leave, but you are not entitled to ordinary maternity leave unless you have notified the HR Manager as soon as is reasonably practicable after the birth that you have given birth and the date on which birth occurred. Such notification must be in writing.

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If you notify the HR Manager of your intended start date or that your ordinary maternity leave period has been triggered due to premature absence or premature childbirth, we will respond in writing within the next 28 days acknowledging your intentions and informing you of the date on which you must return to work after your full 52-week maternity leave entitlement.

The above notification will be given to you where we have been notified of:

- The intended start date, or that it has been triggered by premature absence or premature childbirth with 28 days from the date in which the company received the notification.
- A variation, within 28 days of the date on which your ordinary maternity leave commenced.

Stillbirth

The definition of childbirth is the birth of a child either living or dead, after 24 weeks of pregnancy. If you suffer a stillbirth after this time, you have the right to statutory maternity leave.

Health and safety

To protect your health and safety we will complete a risk assessment and provide you with information as to any risks identified in this. If the risk assessment reveals that you would be exposed to health hazards in carrying out your normal job, we will take such steps as are reasonably necessary to avoid those risks, such as altering your working conditions.

In some cases, this may mean offering you suitable alternative work (if available) on terms and conditions that are not substantially less favourable. If you believe there is a risk to your health or safety or to that of your baby which has not been considered in the risk assessment, you must bring the risk to our attention.

Contact during maternity leave

Shortly before your maternity leave starts, we will discuss the arrangements for you to keep in touch during leave, should you wish to do so. We reserve the right in any event to maintain reasonable contact with you from time to time during your maternity leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given or to update you on developments at work.

Keeping-in-touch days

Except during the first two weeks after childbirth, you can agree to work (or to attend training) for up to 10 days during either ordinary maternity leave or additional maternity leave without that work bringing the period of your maternity leave to an end and without loss of a week's SMP. These are known as 'keeping-in-touch' days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work, and you have no right to undertake any work, during your maternity leave. Any work undertaken, including the amount of salary paid for any work done on keeping-in-touch days, is entirely a matter for agreement between us. Any keeping-in-touch days worked do not extend the period of maternity leave.

Maternity Pay

If you have at least 26 weeks' service at the start of the 15th week before your child is born you will normally be entitled to receive maternity pay (SMP) whether or not you intend to return to work.

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Maternity pay is payable at two rates for a maximum of 39 weeks. For the first six weeks of absence you will be paid at the higher rate of 90% of your salary. After this time you will be paid at the lower rate of SMP in force at the time. To be entitled to maternity pay, you must give 28 days' notice in writing of absence on maternity grounds (as above). If you intend to take maternity leave you only need give written notice as referred to above, otherwise you should give separate written notice.

Your maternity pay will be paid into your bank account on the same date that you would have received your normal salary and will be subject to the usual deductions for tax, National Insurance and pension contributions. If you do not qualify for maternity pay you may be able to claim state maternity allowance. The Finance Manager will be able to advise you on how to claim this.

Contractual Benefits

You will continue to receive your contractual benefits during your SML (apart from remuneration).

Holidays

While you are on ordinary and additional maternity leave both your contractual holiday entitlement and your statutory holiday entitlement under the Working Time Regulations continue to accrue.

Long-Term Disability Insurance

If you are eligible for long-term disability insurance, this will continue throughout your maternity leave period.

Returning from Maternity Leave

You have the automatic right to come back to work following maternity leave and it is assumed that you will return unless you say otherwise. Although you are not required to give any formal notice of returning to work it helps us to plan for your return if you contact us in advance to discuss your return.

If you wish to return to work before your maternity leave has ended you must give us at least eight weeks notice of the date on which you intend to return. If you do not do so we may postpone your return to such a date as will give us eight weeks' notice, provided that this is not later than the expected return date.

Returning to Work

If you return to work on or before 26 weeks of your SML, you will return to work in the same job that you left before you started your maternity leave. If for health and safety reasons you were doing a different job from your usual one while you were pregnant, you may be required to return to that different job for a short time if you are still at risk when you return to work.

If you return to work after 26 weeks of your SML you will be entitled to return to the job which you were employed before your absence or, if that is not reasonably practicable for the company, then return to another job which is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances.

Your right to return means that you return on terms and conditions no less favourable than those that would have been applied if you had not been absent and with the same level of seniority, pension rights and other similar rights.

If annual salary reviews occur during your period of absence, you will be notified of your reviewed salary at this time. You will receive your reviewed salary upon your return to work. If you become eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of your maternity leave

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(whether ordinary maternity leave or additional maternity leave), the higher or standard rate of SMP will be recalculated to take account of the pay rise, regardless of whether SMP has already been paid. This means that the SMP will be recalculated and increased retrospectively, or that you may qualify for SMP if you did not previously. You will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between SMP already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

If you decide not to return to work, then we would ask you to notify your Line Manager or the HR Manager of your decision immediately. You must give notice in accordance with the terms of your contract. If you have received contractual maternity pay in excess of your statutory entitlement, you will have to repay this amount to the company upon termination of your contract.

If you cannot return to work because you are ill, you should notify your line manager.

b) Adoption Leave

As soon as practicable after the notification that you will be adopting a child, arrangements will be made for you to meet with your Line Manager and/or the HR Manager. This will be an informal interview, the purpose of which is to confirm that:

- Your right to adoption leave and any additional leave is understood, including the requirements to give appropriate notices.
- The right to return is explained.
- You know your entitlements to payment during the adoption period.

We recognise that arrangements for cover during the period of adoption leave and also for enabling you to keep in touch with any developments at work are important for ensuring smooth transitions at each stage. Accordingly, prior to commencement of adoption leave, you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and also for providing you with opportunities to remain in contact whilst you are on leave.

As far as possible, such arrangements will be finalised in consultation with you. If you have staff reporting to you, you will be involved in all decisions relating to the temporary reporting arrangements to cover your adoption leave.

In addition, you will usually remain on circulation lists for internal memoranda and other documents, and will be included in invitations to work-related social events as though you were still at work.

We will try to ensure that adoption leave does not cause you any long-term disadvantage in relation to your training needs and self-development.

As you have a right to return to work in your old job, we will seek to avoid your being put into a position of potential redundancy whilst on adoption leave. In accordance with statutory requirements, where job losses are unavoidable you will be given first consideration for any suitable alternative employment that may arise.

At least two weeks before you are due to return to work, you will be invited for an informal meeting with your Line Manager and/or the HR Manager in order to provide an opportunity for discussion of any material points concerning your return to work. These include:

- Updating you on developments at work.
- Considering whether any retraining needs have arisen because of time away from the workplace or new technical or other developments; it is our aim to ensure that your adoption leave does not put you at a disadvantage in relation to skills or other training needs.
- Providing you with the opportunity of indicating whether you wish to be considered for flexible working arrangements.
- Providing you with an opportunity to discuss and explain any necessary and unavoidable changes to your work.

The Right to Adoption Leave

Adoption leave and pay will be available to:

- Individuals who adopt.
- Adoption leave is available to men and women (whether married or single) who adopt a child through an approved adoption agency. Where a couple jointly adopt a child, only one of them will

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be entitled to take adoption leave (the couple can choose which). The other adoptive parent will normally be entitled to take paternity leave, provided that he or she meets the relevant statutory criteria.

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Qualification

To qualify for adoption leave you must:

- Be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency; this right will not therefore apply to, e.g. stepparents adopting a stepchild.
- Have been employed continuously by McFT for 26 weeks leading into the week in which you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption.

Length of Leave

You are entitled to 52 weeks of statutory adoption leave. Only one period of leave is available even if you are adopting more than one child.

If the child's placement ends during adoption leave, you will be able to take up to eight weeks' adoption leave after the end of the placement.

When Adoption Leave Starts

Adoption leave can start:

- From the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or
- From a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

Adoption Pay

If you qualify for adoption leave you will also qualify for statutory adoption pay provided that your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions. Statutory adoption pay is payable for up to 39 weeks at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

Your adoption pay will be paid into your bank account on the same date that you would have received your normal salary and will be subject to the usual deductions for tax, National Insurance and pension contributions.

Notification

You are required to inform your Line Manager or HR Manager in writing of your intention to take adoption leave within seven days of being notified by your adoption agency that you have been matched with a child for adoption, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You will need to state:

- When the child is expected to be placed with you and
- When you want your adoption leave to start.

You will also have to provide us with a "matching certificate" from the adoption agency.

You can change your mind about the date you want to start your adoption leave but will have to inform your Line Manager at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable. Once we receive your notice, we will write to you within 28 days, setting out the date on which we expect you to return to work if the full entitlement to adoption leave is taken.

Contractual Benefits

You will continue to receive your contractual benefits during your ordinary and additional adoption leave period (apart from remuneration).

Holidays

While you are on ordinary and additional adoption leave both your contractual holiday entitlement and your statutory holiday entitlement under the Working Time Regulations continue to accrue.

Contact during adoption leave

Shortly before your adoption leave starts, we will discuss the arrangements for you to keep in touch during leave, should you wish to do so. We reserve the right in any event to maintain reasonable contact with you from time to time during your adoption leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given or to update you on developments at work.

Keeping-in-touch days

You can agree to work (or to attend training) for up to 10 days during either ordinary adoption leave or additional adoption leave without that work bringing the period of your adoption leave to an end and without loss of a week's SAP. These are known as 'keeping-in-touch' days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

We have no right to require you to carry out any work, and you have no right to undertake any work, during your maternity leave. Any work undertaken, including the amount of salary paid for any work done on keeping-in-touch days, is entirely a matter for agreement between us. Any keeping-in-touch days worked do not extend the period of adoption leave. Once the keeping-in-touch days have been used up, you will lose a week's SAP for any week in which you agree to work.

Returning to Work

You may return to work at any time during ordinary adoption leave or additional adoption leave, provided that you give the appropriate notification. Alternatively, you may take your full period of adoption leave entitlement and return to work at the end of this period.

If you wish to return before the full period of adoption leave has elapsed, you must give at least eight weeks' notice in writing to the Company of the date on which you intend to return.

You have the right to resume working in the same job if returning to work from ordinary adoption leave. If you return to work after a period of additional adoption leave, you are entitled to return either to the same job, or if this is not reasonably practicable, to another suitable job that is on terms and conditions not less favourable.

Failure to return to work by the end of adoption leave will be treated as an unauthorised absence unless you are sick and produce a current medical certificate before the end of the adoption leave period. If you decide that you do not wish to return to work, you should give written notice of resignation as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

c) Paternity Leave

An employee whose wife, civil partner or partner gives birth to a child is entitled to two weeks' paid paternity leave provided that he or she has 26 weeks' continuous service by the week that falls 15 weeks before the week in which the child is expected. Paternity leave is also available to adoptive parents where a child is matched or newly placed with them for adoption. Either the adoptive father or the adoptive mother may take paternity leave where the other adoptive parent has elected to take adoption leave. A separate policy is available in respect of adoption leave

The right to paternity leave is available to the biological father of a child or to a person who is married to, the civil partner, or the cohabiting partner of, the child's mother. It is also available to the spouse, civil partner or partner of a child's adopter, or where a couple jointly adopt a child to the individual who does not take adoption leave.

The definition of 'partner' includes same-sex partners. To qualify for paternity leave, you must have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing. As a result paternity leave is not available to biological fathers who are not likely to have parental responsibility for their child.

Paternity leave is granted in addition to your normal annual holiday entitlement. Paternity leave must be taken in a single block of one or two weeks within eight weeks of the birth or adoption of the child, or of the first day of the employee's partner's expected week of childbirth, if the baby is born prematurely. Only one period of leave will be available to you even if more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy.

Eligibility for Ordinary Paternity Leave

In order to be eligible for paternity leave you must satisfy the following criteria:

- You must be the father of the child or married to, the civil partner or the partner of the child's mother, married to, the civil partner or the partner of the child's adopter, or one of a couple jointly adopting a child, and expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child.
- You must have a minimum of 26 weeks' service, calculated as at 15 weeks before the baby is due to be born, or in respect of an adopted child, calculated as at the week in which the child's adopter was notified of having been matched with the child.
- You must give notice of your intention to take paternity leave at least 15 weeks before the baby is due to be born or, in the case of an adopted child, no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. Notice, which must be in writing if the employer so requests, must specify the date the child is expected to be born or adopted, the intended start date and the length of the intended leave. In the case of an adopted child, the notice should also specify the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child.
- The employee must, if asked by the employer to do so, produce evidence of entitlement to paternity leave by signing a self-certification form declaring that he or she meets the statutory eligibility criteria.

Pay

During your paternity leave you may be entitled to statutory paternity pay (SPP) from the company. Instead of normal pay, you are normally entitled to statutory paternity pay paid at the standard rate in force at the time of the payment or at 90% of your average earnings, if this figure is lower.

Notice

If you wish to request paternity leave in respect of a birth child, you must give the HR Manager 15 weeks' written notice of the date on which your partner's baby is due, the length of paternity leave you wish to take and the date on which you wish the leave to start.

In the case of an adopted child, you must give written notice of your intention to take paternity leave no later than seven days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. The notice must specify the date the child is expected to be placed for adoption, the

date you intend to start paternity leave, the length of the intended paternity leave period and the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child.

If you subsequently wish to change the timing of the paternity leave, you must give 28 days' written notice of the new dates. You must also complete and sign a self-certificate declaring that you are entitled to paternity leave and statutory paternity pay.

Contractual Benefits

You are entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary, throughout your paternity leave. You may be entitled to SPP for this period.

You will continue to remain bound by any obligations arising under your contract of employment.

Return to Work After Paternity Leave

You are entitled to return to the same job following no more than two weeks' paternity leave.

If, however, you take two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave (which could include additional adoption leave or parental leave of more than four weeks), you will be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed before your absence or, if that is not reasonably practicable for the company, then to return to another job which is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances.

You have the right to return:

- With your seniority, pension rights and similar rights.
- On terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied if you had not been absent.

You will not be subject to any detriment by the company because you took or sought to take paternity leave.

d) Parental Leave Policy

If you have been in our employment continuously for one year you are entitled to parental leave provided:

- You are the parent of a child under the age of 18 or have adopted a child under the age of 18
- You have acquired formal parental responsibility for a child who is under the age of 18

You are entitled to unpaid parental leave of a maximum of 18 weeks for each child. Leave must be taken in blocks of one week. However, if the child qualified for a disability living allowance, the leave can be taken as single days or multiples of a day.

Before Taking Parental Leave

As soon as practicable after you have notified us that you intend to take parental leave, arrangements will be made for you to meet with your Manager. This will be an informal interview, the purpose of which is to confirm that:

- You understand your rights to parental leave and the requirements to give appropriate notices (see below).
- The right to return to work is explained.

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- Arrangements for time off are known.
- You know that the leave from work is unpaid.

Notice

Once you have given us notice of your intention to take parental leave, you must comply with any request made by us to produce for our inspection evidence of your entitlement.

The notice given to us must specify your intention to take parental leave and the dates on which the period of leave is to begin and end.

Notice must be given 21 days before the date on which the leave is to begin. You may not take more than 4 weeks' leave in respect of an individual child during a particular year. If the operation of business will be unduly disrupted by the parental leave, it may be postponed if absolutely necessary.

You are not entitled to parental leave unless you have complied with the request by us to produce evidence of your entitlement. In certain circumstances, we are entitled to postpone a period of parental leave.

The types or evidence that we may request is such evidence that shows:

- Your responsibility or expected responsibility for the child in respect of whom you propose to take parental leave.
- The child's date of birth, or in the case of a child who was placed with you for adoption, the date on which the placement began, and
- In the case where your entitlement depends on whether the child is entitled to disability living allowance (i.e. after the child's fifth birthday or for a period less than a week), the child's entitlement to that allowance.

No request will be made by us unless it is reasonable.

During Parental Leave

Arrangements will be made for cover of your workload, and you will be kept in touch with important work developments. In addition, we will ensure that you remain on circulation lists for internal memoranda and will be included in invitations to work-related social events as though you were still at work.

We will try to ensure that parental leave does not cause any long-term disadvantage to you concerning your training needs and self-development.

You are bound during the parental leave period by your implied obligation to the company of good faith and specific terms relating to notice, disclosure of confidential information, acceptance of gifts and whether you are participating in any other business. The disciplinary and grievance procedures continues to apply, as does any entitlement to compensation for redundancy.

Returning to Work

If the period of leave is 4 weeks or less, you essentially have the right to return to the same job. If the period is for more than four weeks (because it followed on from other statutory leave), then the right is to return to the same job or, if that is not practicable, to a similar job which has the same status, terms and conditions as the old job.

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If you are entitled to return to the same job, then it means a right to return with the same seniority, pension rights and similar rights, and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have been applied if you had not been absent. You will not be subjected to any detriment by the company for taking or requesting parental leave,

Shared Parental Leave

From April 2015, employed mothers can switch part of their SML and SMP into shared parental leave and shared paternity pay, providing the parents satisfy the eligibility requirements. These include that both the mother and partner have worked for their employer continuously for at least 26 weeks up to the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth. Shared parental leave only becomes available once the mother has given notice to end her entitlement to maternity leave early. This means that the portion of maternity leave which is untaken by the mother will, in effect, be converted into shared parental leave. Only the two weeks of compulsory maternity leave may not be shared in this way. Therefore, any period of maternity leave taken by the mother will be deducted from the period of 50 weeks' shared parental leave, with the balance available to be shared between the parents

The mother can choose whether to give up her SML and the parents can choose how they share any SPL, taking it in turns or taking time off together. At least 8 weeks notice must be given before the start of any period of SPL. If you wish to take Shared Parental Leave, please speak to your Line Manager or the HR Manager at the earliest opportunity.

e) Time off for dependents

All employees (irrespective of length of service, and whether they are part time or full time) are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours in order to take necessary action:

- to provide assistance when a dependent falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for an ill or injured dependent
- in consequence of the death of a dependent
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependent
- to deal with an incident that involves their child and occurs unexpectedly while the child is at school/other educational establishment

You must inform your line manager of the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be absent as soon as is reasonably practicable. Time off work under this right is envisaged as being less than one day in most cases. Dependents are classed as:

- a spouse
- a civil partner
- a child
- a parent
- a person who lives with the employee other than as his / his employee, tenant, lodger or boarder
- any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if he/she fell ill or was injured or assaulted, or who would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury; or
- relation to the disruption or termination of care for a dependent, any other person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care

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McFT recognises that work-life balance is important. Therefore, if you have 26 weeks' service or more, all employees have the right to request flexible working. The change agreed will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment, unless a trial or temporary period is agreed. The change agreed may impact your pay and/or other terms and conditions if your working hours and/or output are affected.

If you wish to request flexible working you should follow this policy.

All employees who have at least 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to make a request to work flexibly. Requests will be dealt with within a three-month period, starting with the date of the application and ending with the final decision. The opportunities for flexible working will depend on the needs of the business, but we recognise that you may be interested in working more flexibly and such requests would include reducing working hours, working at home, job-sharing or changing your working pattern. We will make every effort to accommodate requests for flexible working, provided that your duties can still be effectively carried out on such a basis.

Any request to work flexibly must be made in writing by email and by filling in the Flexible Working application form. You are allowed to make only one formal application in any 12-month period.

You must include within any request:

- the date of the application;
- the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions;
- the date on which you would like the terms and conditions to come into effect;
- what effect you think the requested change would have on the organisation;
- how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if you have made a previous application, when you made that application.

Once you have made a request, your line manager will contact you to arrange a meeting.

Your request will be dealt with within a three-month period, starting with the date of your application and ending with the date on which the final decision is made, whether this is at the initial meeting or by way of an appeal.

Following the meeting, your request will be carefully considered. Your request may be granted in full or granted in part. For example, your manager may consider allowing a trial period or suggesting some other arrangement as a compromise. If your request is rejected, your manager will write to you giving reasons. A request may be rejected on one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods you propose to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

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If your request is not granted in full, you will have the right to appeal. Any appeal meeting will be held by a different manager. The decision on appeal will be notified to you within three months of your initial application, although you may agree to an extension of time with the manager concerned.