



GOV.UK

# Shared Parental Leave and Pay

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## 1. Overview

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You may be able to get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) if you're having a baby or adopting a child.

If you're [eligible for SPL](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/eligibility) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/eligibility>) you can use it to [take leave in blocks](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/booking-blocks-of-leave) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/booking-blocks-of-leave>) separated by periods of work, instead of taking it all in one go.

To [start SPL or ShPP](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/when-you-can-start) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/when-you-can-start>) the mother must end her maternity leave (for SPL) or her Maternity Allowance or maternity pay (for ShPP). If she doesn't get maternity leave (but she ends her Maternity Allowance or pay early) her partner might still get SPL.

If you're adopting then you or your partner must end any adoption leave or adoption pay early instead.

If you're eligible you can take:

- the remaining leave as SPL (52 weeks minus any weeks of maternity or adoption leave)
- the remaining pay as ShPP (39 weeks minus any weeks of maternity pay, maternity allowance or adoption pay)

If neither of you is entitled to [maternity leave](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility) (<https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility>) or [adoption leave](https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/eligibility) (<https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/eligibility>) then SPL will be 52 weeks minus any weeks of maternity pay, Maternity Allowance or adoption pay.

You can share SPL and ShPP between you if you're both eligible.

**Example** A mother and her partner are both eligible for SPL and ShPP. The mother ends her maternity leave and pay after 12 weeks, leaving 40 weeks available for SPL and 27 weeks available for ShPP. The parents can choose how to split this.

SPL and ShPP must be taken between the baby's birth and first birthday (or within one year of adoption).

## 2. Eligibility

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Each parent qualifies separately for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

If you're eligible you can start SPL and take leave in separate blocks, instead of taking it all in one go like maternity or adoption leave. You can also share the leave between you if you're both eligible.

! You can [check whether you can get leave and pay \(https://www.gov.uk/pay-leave-for-parents\)](https://www.gov.uk/pay-leave-for-parents), including SPL and ShPP.

## Shared Parental Leave

To qualify for SPL, you must share responsibility for the child with one of the following:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or joint adopter
- the child's other parent
- your partner (if they live with you and the child)

You or your partner must be eligible for [maternity pay or leave \(https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility\)](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/eligibility), [adoption pay or leave \(https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/eligibility\)](https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/eligibility) or [Maternity Allowance \(https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/eligibility\)](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/eligibility).

You must also:

- have been employed continuously by the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date (or by the date you're matched with your adopted child)
- stay with the same employer while you take SPL

During the 66 weeks before the week the baby's due (or the week you're matched with your adopted child) your partner must:

- have been working for at least 26 weeks (they don't need to be in a row)
- have earned at least £390 in total in 13 of the 66 weeks (add up the highest paying weeks, they don't need to be in a row)

This can be as an employee, worker or self-employed person. Your partner doesn't have to be working at the date of birth or when you start SPL or ShPP.

## Statutory Shared Parental Pay

You can get ShPP if you're an [employee \(https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/employee\)](https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/employee) and one of the following applies:

- you're eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)
- you're eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) and your partner is eligible for SMP, Maternity Allowance (MA) or SAP

You can also get ShPP if you're a [worker \(https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker\)](https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker) and you're eligible for SMP or SPP.

## 3. When you can start

You can only start Shared Parental Leave (SPL) or Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) once the child has been born or placed for adoption.

## For SPL to start

The mother (or the person getting adoption leave) must either:

- return to work, which ends any maternity or adoption leave
- give their employer 'binding notice' of the date when they plan to end their leave (you can't normally change the date you give in binding notice)

**!** You can start SPL while your partner is still on maternity or adoption leave as long as they've given binding notice to end it.

You can give binding notice and say when you plan to [take your SPL](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/applying-for-leave-and-pay) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/applying-for-leave-and-pay>) at the same time.

## If the mother or adopter doesn't get maternity or adoption leave

The mother or adopter must end any maternity pay, adoption pay or Maternity Allowance so that they or their partner can get SPL.

## For ShPP to start

The mother (or the person getting adoption pay) must give their employer binding notice of the date when they plan to end any maternity or adoption pay.

If they get Maternity Allowance, they must give notice to Jobcentre Plus instead.

They can't restart maternity pay, Maternity Allowance or adoption pay once it's ended.

**!** You can start ShPP while your partner is still on maternity pay, adoption pay or Maternity Allowance as long as they've given binding notice to end it.

You can give binding notice and say when you plan to [take your ShPP](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/applying-for-leave-and-pay) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/applying-for-leave-and-pay>) at the same time.

## Compulsory leave

A mother can't return to work before the end of the compulsory 2 weeks of maternity leave following the birth (4 weeks if she works in a factory). If you're adopting, the person claiming adoption pay must take at least 2 weeks of adoption leave.

## Cancelling the decision to end maternity or adoption leave

The mother or adopter may be able to change their decision to end maternity or adoption leave early if both:

- the planned end date hasn't passed
- they haven't already returned to work

One of the following must also apply:

- you find out during the 8-week notice period that neither of you is eligible for SPL or ShPP
- the mother or adopter's partner has died
- the mother tells her employer less than 6 weeks after the birth (and she gave notice before the birth)

## 4. What you'll get

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If you're [eligible \(https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/eligibility\)](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/eligibility) and you or your partner end maternity or adoption leave and pay (or Maternity Allowance) early, then you can:

- take the rest of the 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave as Shared Parental Leave (SPL)
- take the rest of the 39 weeks of maternity or adoption pay (or Maternity Allowance) as Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

## How much pay you'll get

ShPP is paid at the rate of £139.58 a week or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

This is the same as [Statutory Maternity Pay \(SMP\) \(https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/pay\)](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/pay) except that during the first 6 weeks SMP is paid at 90% of whatever you earn (with no maximum).

**Example** A woman decides to start her maternity leave 4 weeks before the due date and gives notice that she'll start SPL from 10 weeks after the birth (taking a total of 14 weeks maternity leave). She normally earns £200 a week.

She's paid £180 (90% of her average weekly earnings) as SMP for the first 6 weeks of maternity leave, then £139.58 a week for the next 8 weeks. Once she goes onto SPL, she's still paid £139.58 a week.

## 5. Applying for leave and pay

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To get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) or Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) you must:

- follow the rules for [starting SPL and ShPP \(https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/when-you-can-start\)](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/when-you-can-start)
- give your employer at least 8 weeks' written notice of your leave dates

You can do both at the same time using forms created by Acas.

[Download 'Shared parental leave forms \(for maternity\)' \(DOC, 156KB\)](#)

[Download 'Shared parental leave forms \(for adoption\)' \(DOC, 159KB\)](#)

[Download 'Shared parental leave forms \(for parental order surrogacy\)' \(DOC, 160KB\)](#)

You can change your mind later about how much SPL or ShPP you plan to take and when you want to take it. You must give notice of any changes at least 8 weeks before the start of any leave.

**!** You might not get SPL or ShPP if you don't include all the required information.

Your partner must apply to their own employer if they also want SPL or ShPP.

## Giving more information

Your employer can ask you for more information within 14 days of you applying for SPL or ShPP. They can ask for:

- a copy of the birth certificate
- a declaration of the place and date of birth (if the birth hasn't been registered yet)
- the name and address of your partner's employer or a declaration that your partner has no employer

If you're adopting, your employer can ask for the:

- name and address of the adoption agency
- date you were matched with the child
- date the child will be start to live with you
- name and address of your partner's employer or a declaration that your partner has no employer

You must give this information within 14 days of being asked for it.

## 6. Booking blocks of leave

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You can book up to 3 separate blocks of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) instead of taking it all in one go, even if you aren't sharing the leave with your partner.

If your partner is also eligible for SPL, you can take up to 3 blocks of leave each. You can take leave at different times or both at the same time.

You must tell your employer about your plans for leave when you [apply for SPL](https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/apply-for-shared-parental-leave) (<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay/apply-for-shared-parental-leave>).

You can change these plans later but you must give your employer at least 8 weeks' notice before you want to begin a block of leave.

## Splitting blocks of leave

If your employer agrees, you can split blocks into shorter periods of at least a week.

### **Example**

A mother finishes her maternity leave at the end of October and takes the rest of her leave as SPL. She shares it with her partner, who's also eligible. They each take the whole of November as their first blocks of SPL. The partner then returns to work.

The mother also returns to work in December. She gives her employer notice that she'll go on leave again in February - this is her second block of SPL. Her employer agrees to a work pattern of 2 weeks on, 2 weeks off during the block.

### **Shared Parental Leave in touch (SPLIT) days**

You and your partner can each work up to 20 days while you're taking SPL. These are called 'Shared Parental Leave in touch' (or SPLIT) days.

These days are in addition to the 10 'keeping in touch' (<https://www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave>) (or KIT) days available to those on maternity or adoption leave.

KIT and SPLIT days are optional - both you and your employer must agree to them.