

CLERGY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Paternity Leave Policy

Policy Approver(s)	The Bishop of Exeter and their Senior Team
Policy Owner(s)	Bishop of Crediton Archdeacon of Totnes Diocesan Director of People
Revised By	Diocesan Director of People
This version	June 2026
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Related Documents	Diocese of Exeter: Clergy Maternity Leave Policy Diocese of Exeter: Clergy Adoption Leave Policy Diocese of Exeter: Clergy Parental Leave Policy Diocese of Exeter: Clergy Shared Parental Leave Policy
Scope	<p>This Policy applies to all persons beneficed, licensed or otherwise authorised by the Bishop for ministry in the Diocese of Exeter. This includes all clergy holding office under Common Tenure, Qualified Common Tenure and Freehold and applies equally to Cathedral Clergy, Archdeacons and Bishops.</p> <p>The Diocese of Exeter reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion at any time.</p>
Extensions	Individuals identified in Paragraph 2.
Exclusions	Individuals identified in Paragraph 2.

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1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of office holders who are about to become or have recently become fathers and sets out arrangements for taking Paternity Leave.

This policy also outlines the enhanced Diocesan Paternity Pay provision for qualifying office holders in the Diocese of Exeter.

In the event that (*under Regulation 23 of the 2009 Regulations which confers on office holders the same legal entitlement to statutory maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave as employees are entitled to under the Employment Rights Act 1996*) changes are made to the Employment Rights Act 1996 (or any regulations made under it) to the rights of employees in respect of maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave, these changes will automatically apply to office holders and take precedence over this policy.

For the latest Church of England guidance:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/clergy-payroll/parental-leave>

For current government advice:

[Paternity pay and leave: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/parental-leave-overview) An office holder cannot take paternity leave if they have first taken Shared Parental Leave.

Additional Paternity Leave was abolished in 2015 and was replaced by Shared Parental Leave. Please see the Shared Parental Leave policy for details of more flexible arrangements available to parents and how they can share childcare during the first year of their child's life.

This policy is effective from 01 June 2026 and shall not apply to any actions that occurred prior to this date.

2. Who is Covered by the Policy?

This policy applies to all stipendiary office holders both full time and part time including stipendiary cathedral office holders, archdeacons and bishops.

Non stipendiary office holders are entitled to Statutory Paternity Leave regardless of the length of service but are not entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay.

This policy does not apply to clergy employees who have the same statutory rights to pay and leave as other employees, and whose entitlement to enhanced pay during any period of statutory paternity leave will be determined by their employment contract. Clergy employed by EDBF enjoy the same enhanced paternity pay as provided by this policy.

3. Definitions

The definitions which apply in this policy:

Expected Week of Childbirth: The week, beginning on a Sunday, in which the doctor or midwife expects the office holder's spouse, to give birth.

Expected Placement Date: The date on which an adoption agency expects that it will place a child into the office holder's care with a view to adoption.

Partner: civil partner or someone (of either sex) with whom you live in an enduring family relationship, but who is not your parent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle.

4. Notification Requirements

An office holder should inform their Archdeacon of their spouse/partner's pregnancy. Initial thoughts regarding potential paternity leave can be discussed in the first instance with the Archdeacon.

Stipendiary office holders wishing to take Paternity Leave must notify the Finance Officer for Clergy Payroll and the Archdeacon using the form in Appendix and completing the online [SC3](#) form or [download the SC3 form](#).

Stipendiary office holders wishing to take Paternity Leave on the adoption of a child should complete the online [SC4](#) form.

The individual should give notice, in writing, by the end of the 15th week prior to the Expected Week of Childbirth or, if this is not possible, as soon as possible thereafter. In a case of adoption, the individual should give notice no more than seven days after the individual or their spouse/Partner are notified of having been matched with the child or, if this is not possible (as in the case of a 'foster to adopt' placement) as soon as possible.

We may require a signed declaration from the office holder that they are taking paternity leave for a purpose for which it is intended; namely, to care for the child or to support the child's mother in caring for the child.

Notification of Birth

If an office holder wishes to take Paternity Leave in relation to a child's birth, they must give us notice in writing of their intention to do so and confirm:

- The Expected Week of Childbirth.
- Whether it is intended to take one week's leave or two consecutive weeks' leave.
- When they would like to start paternity leave.

The individual can state that the leave will start on:

- The day of the child's birth.
- A day which is a specified number of days after the child's birth.
- A specific date later than the first date of the Expected Week of Childbirth.

Notification of Adoption

If an office holder wishes to take Paternity Leave in relation to the adoption of a child, they must give us notice in writing of his intention to do so and confirm:

- The date on which they or their spouse/partner, were notified of having been matched with the child, together with the Expected Placement Date (date on which an adoption agency expects it will place a child into the individuals care with a view to adoption).
- Whether it is intended to take one week's leave or two consecutive weeks' leave.
- When they would like to start paternity leave.

The individual can state that the leave will start on:

- The day on which the child is placed with them or the adopter.
- A day which is a specified number of days after the child's placement.
- A specific date later than the Expected Placement Date.

Office holders remain entitled to the benefits of all their terms and conditions throughout their paternity leave period, including their right to return to work and accrual of annual leave.

5. Entitlement to Statutory Paternity Leave

Office holders can take Paternity Leave in relation to the birth or adoption of a child. An office holder is only entitled to one period of leave irrespective of whether more than one child is born from the same pregnancy. There is a right to Paternity Leave even if the child has died or was stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

An office holder cannot take Paternity Leave if they have first taken Shared Parental Leave.

In adoption cases Paternity Leave is not available to an office holder who decides to take Adoption Leave. Further details of Adoption Leave are set out in our Adoption Policy.

The office holder is entitled to Paternity leave if he meets all the following conditions:

- In birth cases the individual must have been in continuous service for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.
- In adoption cases the individual must have been in continuous service for at least 26 weeks by the week in which he, or his wife are notified by an adoption agency that they have been matched with a child.

However the Diocese of Exeter will remove the continuous service requirement and extend the right to Paternity Leave to all qualifying office holders regardless of their length of service.

The entitlement to Paternity Leave is available to employees of either gender for the purpose of caring for a child, or supporting the child's other parent, in the following cases:

- On the birth of a child, where either:

- The individual is the biological father and expects to have some responsibility for the child's upbringing; or
- The individual is the mother's spouse/partner and expects to have main responsibility with the mother for the child's upbringing.
- On the birth of a child to a surrogate mother where the individual is, or their spouse/partner is, one of the child's biological parents, and they expect to obtain a parental order giving the individual and their spouse/partner responsibility for the child.
- Where an adoption agency places a child with the individual and/or their spouse/partner for adoption and the individual expects to have main responsibility (with their spouse/partner) for the child's upbringing.
- Where a local authority places a child with the individual and/or their spouse/partner under a fostering for adoption arrangement and the individual expects to have main responsibility (with their spouse/partner) for the child's upbringing.

6. Entitlement to Enhanced Paternity Pay

All qualifying stipendiary office holders regardless of their length of service are eligible for the Diocese of Exeter's enhanced Paternity Pay. This is an enhanced rate of paternity pay above the statutory paternity pay rate which has been extended to include qualifying office holders with less than 12 months continuous service.

For qualifying office holders, the Diocese of Exeter will enhance the Statutory Paternity Pay rate, such that full time stipendiary clergy will be entitled to take up to **two weeks at full pay regardless of their length of service**. The office holder receives the same amount of leave in cases of multiple births. For part-time stipendiary clergy a week is the same number of days that is normally worked in a week.

To qualify for the enhanced paternity pay the office holder:

- Must have been continuously in office between the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and the child's birth.
- Must have had normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit over the eight weeks ending with the qualifying week.
- Must not undertake any work while on Paternity Leave.
- Complete the form at Appendix 1 and give to the Finance Officer for Clergy Payroll.

In addition to which the individual will be entitled to take paid time off work to attend up to two ante-natal appointments (for up to maximum of six and a half hours per appointment) with the agreement of the archdeacon. The Diocese will grant paid leave for ante-natal appointments for fathers or spouses/Partners irrespective of their length of service. This applies to appointments made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor. The diocese reserves the right to request evidence that this is the case.

7. Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)

The rate for SPP is the same as the rate set for Statutory Maternity Pay which is 90% of average weekly earnings or the lower earnings rate set by the government, whichever is the lower.

8. Timing and Length of Paternity Leave

Local cover and other arrangements may need to be made for an individual to take paternity leave.

The Archdeacon should be notified in writing of an intention to take Paternity Leave, detailing:

- The expected week of childbirth.
- The length of leave to be taken.
- The start date (which can be varied depending on the individual circumstances, see section 4, above). The Diocesan Office should be notified of the dates of paternity leave taken.

An office holder is entitled to take up to two consecutive or non-consecutive weeks paid leave, to be taken within 52 weeks of the child's birth or adoption.. Paternity Leave must be taken in units of at least a week.

Additional Paternity Leave was abolished in 2015 and has been replaced by Shared Parental Leave. Please see Shared Parental Leave for details of the more flexible arrangements available to parents and how they can share childcare during the first year of their child's life.

9. Changing the Dates of Paternity Leave

An office holder can change the commencement date provided the Archdeacon is notified. To change the start date of the paternity leave originally agreed, with regard to the birth of a child or the placing of an adopted child with the individual, the office holder should give at least 28 days' written notice before the Expected Week of Childbirth or the Expected Placement Date.

If the individual is unable to give 28 days' written notice of the wish to vary the start of the paternity leave as set out above, they should give written notice of the change as soon as they can.

10. Death of the Child's Mother

Provided both the office holder and the mother met the eligibility requirements for Shared Parental Leave immediately before the mother's death then the father can submit a notice of entitlement and intention to take shared parental leave following the mother's death, if they have not already done so.

This notice must include the date of the mother's death. If the mother had not taken any maternity leave prior to her death, their spouse/Partner can take up to 52 weeks' shared parental leave.

Please see the Shared Parental Leave Policy for further details about eligibility requirements.

11. Terms and Conditions of Service During Paternity Leave

Office holders remain in office while they are on leave which means they retain the rights and responsibilities that go with the office, for example, the right to remain in any accommodation provided for the better performance of their duties and the obligation to ensure that the duties of the office are carried out on their behalf.

The Archdeacon, Rural Dean, churchwardens and members of the parish(es)/Mission Community will work with the office holder to ensure suitable arrangements for cover are made.

12. Pensions

The Clergy Pension Scheme ensures that office holders pension contributions (being the pension contribution part usually paid by the Diocese) are paid during paid statutory leave absence, based on what your earnings would have been if you had not been on paternity leave. If an office holder on their return to work wishes to pay (their individual) pension contributions for the unpaid part of their statutory leave, they must contact the Finance Officer for Clergy Payroll.

Appendix 1: Application for Enhanced Paternity Pay and Paternity Leave – for Finance Officer for Clergy Payroll.

PARENTAL LEAVE FORM

SURNAME N.I. No.

CHRISTIAN NAMES Date of birth

UNIQUE ID

DIOCESE

Tick as appropriate	Leave Start Date (required)	Return to Work Date (if provided)
Paternity Birth <input type="checkbox"/> or Adoption <input type="checkbox"/>		
Maternity <input type="checkbox"/>		
Adoption <input type="checkbox"/>		
Shared Parental L. <input type="checkbox"/>		

DUE DATE

Please tick appropriate form provided

MATB1 Matching Cert

SC3 SC4

Other (please specify)

DIOCESAN PARENTAL POLICY

Please fill as appropriate Full pay Statutory payment only
Number of weeks

MATERNITY / ADOPTION LEAVE - ONLY

Is payee taking unpaid leave? Yes No

How long is unpaid leave for?
Start date of unpaid leave (if applicable)

OTHER INFORMATION

AUTHORISED _____ Date _____
DBF Secretary / Cathedral Administrator / CC