



# The Children's Trust Staff handbook

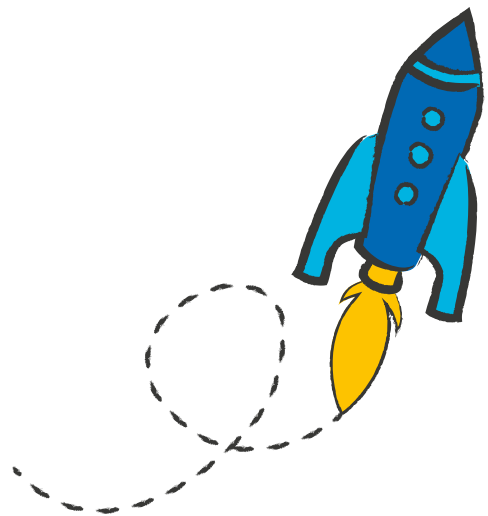
# Aims of the Staff handbook

This handbook acts as a guide to the behaviours we expect of our employees, but at the same time what our employees can expect from us.

In short, it is dedicated to improving the employment journey for all employees of The Children's Trust. We hope that both managers and staff will be able to pick up and use the handbook on a daily basis, as it is full of those frequently asked questions and queries.

But it is more than this. It is also here to give you guidance when something more significant happens in your life. This could be a happy event like having a baby or adopting a child, but equally, it is here to provide support in difficult times, such as a family bereavement.

Some of the benefits you will read about within this handbook are not offered by other organisations. This reflects our goal of becoming a more equitable, diverse and inclusive workforce that embraces and drives change within the charity sector.



## The legal part...

If there is anything in the staff handbook that you do not understand or require further clarification on, you should speak to your line manager or the People team.

This staff handbook does not form part of your Contract of Employment unless otherwise stated and is subject to change at the discretion of The Children's Trust. Please note that all entitlements set out

in this handbook will be outlined as the full-time equivalent, these will be pro-rated where you are working part-time.

The Children's Trust reserves the right to modify, withdraw or initiate any rules or procedures it deems necessary, and will undertake to review the staff handbook in the light of changing working practices or legislation.

The charity will make every effort to notify you when there is an official change to a policy that it contains. However, you are responsible for your own up-to-date knowledge about the organisation's policies, procedures, benefits and working conditions, which are all available on The Loop.

# How to get the best out of the Staff handbook

The Children's Trust recognises and is committed to practising and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). After a review of the Staff handbook with our EDI working group, SPARK, we have made positive changes to the format and how the information is presented, to ensure it is inclusive, accessible and understood by all employees of The Children's Trust.

- Where there is a large amount of text, we have highlighted key points within the main body, e.g. This is a key message that you might like to note.
- Blocks of text have been broken up to make for easier reading.

Within Adobe, you also have the ability to have the Staff handbook read aloud. This can increase accessibility if you are visually impaired or have difficulty reading the text.

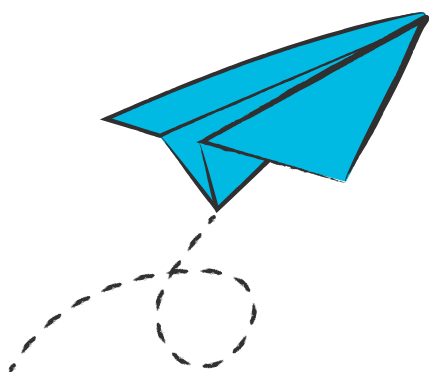
Simply follow these steps to have Adobe Acrobat Reader read this PDF aloud:

- Open Reader and navigate to the document page you want to have read aloud.
- From the top-left menu, click View, then Read Out Loud.
- You can choose to have the whole document read aloud or just the page you're on.
- Select either Read to End of Document or Read This Page Only, respectively.
- To pause or stop the read-out-loud function, go back to the Read Out Loud selection from the View dropdown menu and select either option.
- To choose your preferred reader voice, go to the top-right menu and click Edit, then Preferences. Choose Reading. Remove the checkmark on Use Default Voice, and finally choose the narration voice you like from the dropdown list.
- To adjust the pace of the reading, either increase the Words Per Minute count or lower it, depending on your needs.

## Any questions?

If after reviewing the Staff handbook you still have questions or require further information, please contact the below teams with your queries:

- Training enquires can be sent to [training@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:training@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)
- All payroll and payslips queries can be emailed to [payroll@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:payroll@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)
- For further information on our occupational health services please visit the '[look after yourself](#)' section on The Loop.
- All reference requests should be sent to: [references@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:references@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)
- All leave questions need to be directed to your line manager in the first instance.
- Should any further specific clarity be needed in any aspect of the handbook please email [hrbpaccessqueries@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:hrbpaccessqueries@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)







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## Welcome

Dear colleague,

Welcome to our organisation and thank you for choosing to work at The Children's Trust, the UK's leading charity for children with brain injury and neurodisability.

We aspire to support every child with an acquired brain injury in the UK and are proud to provide rehabilitation at our national specialist centre in Tadworth and support through our Brain Injury Community Service.

We also want to grow our education service at The Children's Trust School, focusing on the increasingly complex education, care and therapy needs of the children we support.

We can only reach our goals by working in an integrated way. As you settle into your role, you'll work closely with an enthusiastic group of people from different disciplines and backgrounds. You'll quickly learn new professional skills and form bonds that we hope will enrich your personal life too.

You'll find a collaborative and helpful team at The Children's Trust – and this enthusiasm and passion runs through our history. In the 1920s, we were the country branch of The Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. In 1984, we became an independant charity in our own right, initially called Tadworth Court Trust. We became The Children's Trust in 1994 and it has been an exciting, progressive journey since our formation.

We wish you a rewarding time at The Children's Trust.

## Our Promises

Our Promises capture our strengths and aspirations. They guide the way we act, interact and come together to achieve our goals.

The journey we took to reach our Promises was an important one. A highly collaborative and iterative process that has seen each word shaped by our people – our volunteers, employees, partners, trustees and suppliers. Internally, and externally.

Perhaps most importantly, at the core of this process are the children, young people and their families. This journey has given us a critical opportunity to give children and young people a voice. As a result, our Promises have been genuinely enriched by them. That's because how

we work and carry out our role is as important as what we do, and that's why as part of The Children's Trust, we all need to live by our five Promises.





### Child first

We're dedicated to making sure children, young people and their families are at the very heart of everything we do. Our work is rooted in the hopes and aspirations of the children and families we support. We are all united around our vision, 'to ensure all children with brain injury and neurodisability have the opportunity to live the best life possible'. And we never forget for some, we're a home away from home.

#### We promise to always:

- put children and young people first, seeking their views and sharing decision-making with them
- contribute to our community, making it warm, positive and fun
- connect meaningfully with children and young people, enriching their lives.



### Aim high

We always aim for the highest possible standards and the biggest positive impact. We balance quality with a sense of exploration and innovation, looking inside and outside for inspiration. We create meaningful partnerships and embrace new ideas with energy. We have a responsibility, to children and young people, to the environment and to each other. And we understand that by being financially strong and sustainable as an organisation, we can grow our support even more. We take this very seriously, seizing every opportunity to improve what we do.

#### We promise to always:

- be curious and courageous, exploring new ideas
- think big, finding ways to add value and improve what we do
- focus on quality, act responsibly and use evidence to support our choice.



### Care deeply

We are one team of employees, volunteers, partners and supporters. We build relationships and connect powerfully, showing genuine care for children and each other and approaching every interaction with compassion and kindness. We're stronger together when we collaborate. And we take pride in what we do, going above and beyond, celebrating successes, big and small.

#### We promise to always:

- be friendly and show genuine compassion
- connect and collaborate effectively inside and outside of our charity
- recognise and encourage each other, taking time to celebrate successes.



### Be open

We're committed to creating an environment of trust, openness and transparency for our colleagues, children, young people and their families. We are good listeners and encourage others to speak up. We respect and value different views and contributions. We create a space that welcomes positive challenge and inspires everyone to be their best and play their part.

#### We promise to always:

- speak up confidently and look for solutions
- listen to others, sharing and receiving feedback in a positive way
- invite different views, respecting everyone's roles and contributions.



### Own it

We all have a critical part to play in achieving our strategy, growth and ambitions, bringing together our diverse experience and expertise. We take every opportunity to learn from each other and our mistakes, always individually and collectively seeking to improve. We take ownership for our work, actions and development and are willing to step up and make decisions. We're committed and reliable in everything we do.

#### We promise to always:

- take responsibility, owning what we do and delivering on our promises
- set ourselves high standards and use our expertise across the charity
- grow from mistakes, taking every opportunity to develop and improve.





# Code of conduct

## Aims, scope and principles

At The Children's Trust we aim high in everything we do to support the children and young people we care for. We have equally high expectations of our staff.

Alongside our Promises, this section provides staff with a guide to the standards of conduct that we expect all staff working within The Children's Trust to follow.

The Children's Trust School will have additional codes of conduct that must be read in conjunction with the overall codes of conduct.

This is to ensure The Children's Trust is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. We expect that all staff will adhere to our formal policies and procedures, will act with personal and professional integrity, and will respect the safety and wellbeing of others.

We will make sure that everyone knows what is expected of them in terms of conduct, work performance and behaviours, through comprehensive briefings and information, including things like job descriptions, induction and training processes, organisational policies and procedures and our Promises.

## What do we expect of our staff?

While working for us you should at all times maintain professional and responsible standards of conduct. In particular you should:

1. Act with honesty, integrity and professionalism at all times
2. Observe the terms and conditions of your contract, particularly with regard to:
  - hours of work
  - confidentiality.
3. Observe all our policies, procedures, rules and regulations which are included in the Staff handbook or notified to you from time-to-time by means of The Loop or otherwise. This includes reading any mandatory read policies within an induction period and as required on an ongoing basis
4. Embrace the Promises of The Children's Trust, which shape behaviour and conduct day-to-day
5. Treat the children and young people and others with dignity and respect and always work in their best interests
6. Take reasonable care in respect of the health and safety of the children and young people we care for, colleagues, volunteers and third parties and comply with our Health and safety policy
7. Follow safeguarding processes and ensure you know your Designated Safeguard Lead and associated policies and procedures
8. Comply with all reasonable instructions given by managers
9. Ensure that you understand and follow this guide to how we work at the Children's Trust at all times.

**Note** that this guidance to behaviours is not intended to cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to alert you to the expectation that you will work positively and, in a manner appropriate



to The Children's Trust. It does not replace the general requirements of:

- your contract
- The Children's Trust Staff handbook, policies and procedures
- any legal, regulatory or professional standards you are required to adhere to
- common sense.

If you are uncertain about what to do in a particular situation or you require further information please talk to your line manager in the first instance or if it links to safeguarding please contact your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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## Links with other policies

It is your responsibility to remain up-to-date with relevant policies, procedures and regulatory and legislative changes.

Key policies include (please note this list is not exhaustive and staff are required to remain up-to-date with all policies relevant to their role):

- Disciplinary policy: which will be used if staff breach the code of conduct. It also sets out examples of what we will deem as gross misconduct
- Grievance policy
- Declarations policy (conflicts of interest, personal relationships, and gifts and hospitality)
- Complaints policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Incident reporting and investigation including Duty of candour policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (most recently published version)
- Health and safety policy
- IT Acceptable Use policy
- People Privacy policy

# Children we support

## Neurorehabilitation: Riley's story

**Twelve-year-old Riley was having a normal cosy New Year's Day when he suddenly experienced an aneurysm and had to be rushed to hospital for life-saving surgery.**

After spending five weeks at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, where he had an aneurysm coil fitted to stop the bleeding on his brain, Riley arrived at The Children's Trust for a residential rehabilitation placement.

At that stage in his recovery, he was still heavily sedated, and unable to speak or move independently. The medical team worked to reduce his dose as quickly as possible, and he started to make great progress.

### Therapy programme

During his placement, Riley received speech and language therapy, music therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy and more. His weekly timetable changed according to his progress and goals.

Riley's Mum Emma said: "The team took the time to find out what Riley enjoyed so that they could motivate him through his interests. Before his aneurysm he always loved baking with his aunty, and here he had baking group once a week, which he loved. It helped his therapy as he was set goals of following

instructions, which helps his attention span and memory function, and weighing and whisking ingredients using his weaker arm."

The multidisciplinary team worked with the family so that they could also complete exercises in Oak House, and he used specialist equipment to help with his limb movement disorder and strengthen his left arm and hand.

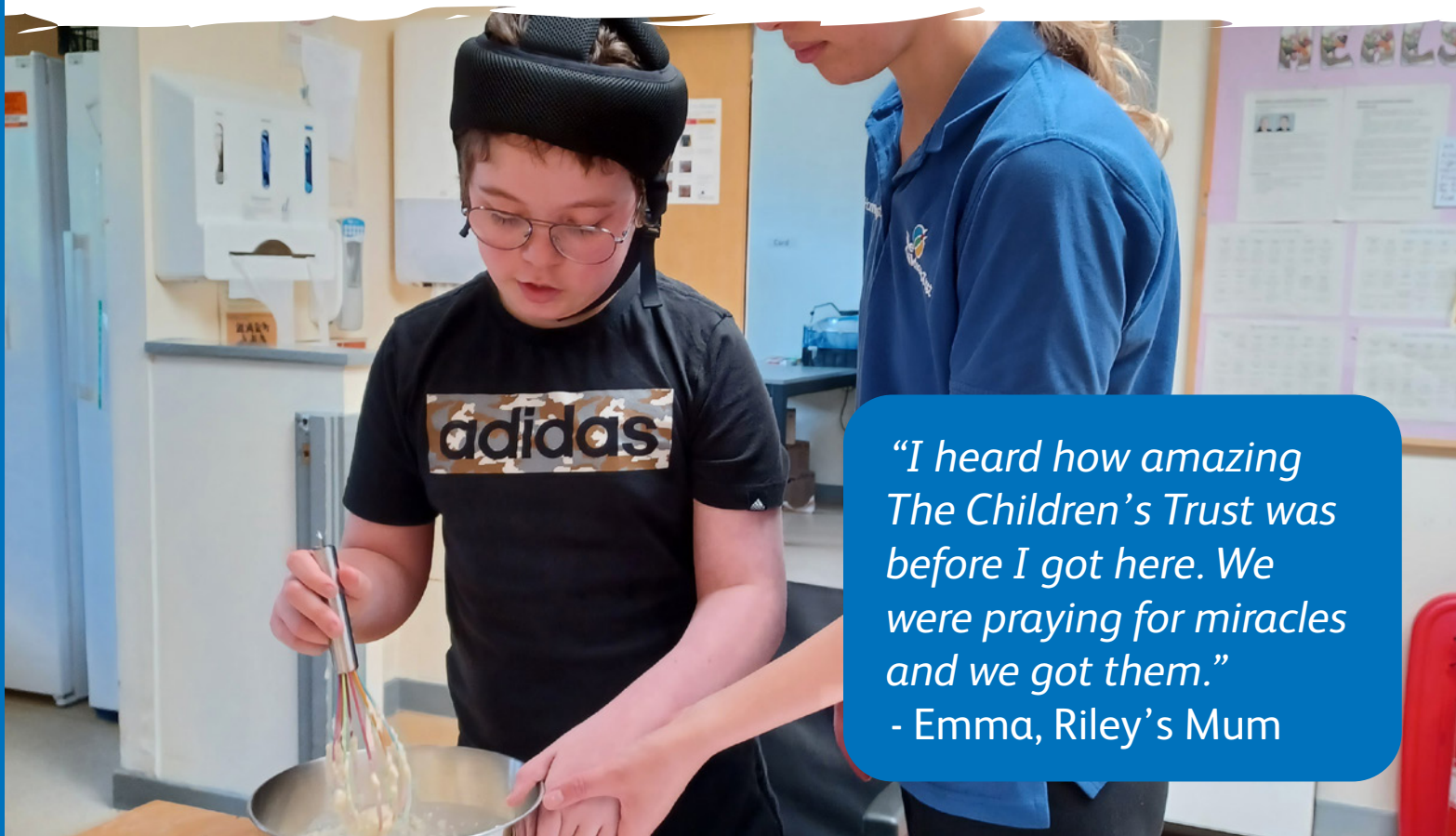
By the end of his placement, he also attended school sessions twice a day.

### Looking forward

By the time Riley completed his 16-week placement he could walk independently for short periods of time, and was looking forward to getting back to his friends and school life.

With the support of the Community Rehabilitation Services team, he continued his physiotherapy sessions and was able to make a phased return to mainstream education.

Emma said: "What Riley has achieved in the last five months is remarkable. Even in the darkest days we held onto love, hope and our belief in Riley. His strength inspires us every day. The hard work is far from over, but we are so excited to see what the next stage of recovery brings."



*"I heard how amazing The Children's Trust was before I got here. We were praying for miracles and we got them."*  
- Emma, Riley's Mum



# Family friendly policy and procedure

## **This policy addresses the following:**

Part A: Maternity leave and pay

Part B: Paternity leave and pay

Part C: Adoption leave and pay

Part D: Shared parental Leave

Part E: Ordinary parental leave

Part F: Neonatal leave and pay

Part G: Time off to care for dependants

Part H: Breastfeeding and expressing milk





## Part A: Maternity leave and pay

### 1. Scope

This section sets out the rights of employees to statutory maternity leave and pay.

### 2. Definitions

The following definitions are used in this section:

- expected week of childbirth (EWC) means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the employee's doctor or midwife expects the baby to be born
- qualifying week means the 15th week before the EWC.

### 3. Health and safety

- 3.1 You are expected to let your manager know that you are pregnant as soon as reasonably practicable in order that a risk assessment may be conducted and any appropriate adjustments made.

### 4. Maternity leave entitlement

- 4.1 All female employees are entitled to a period of Ordinary Maternity Leave of 26 weeks, followed by a further 26 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave, making a total of 52 weeks, regardless of length of service or hours worked. The law obliges all employees to take a minimum of two weeks of maternity leave immediately after the birth of the child.

### 5. Notification of pregnancy

- 5.1 By the end of the qualifying week, or as soon as reasonably practical afterwards, you must notify your line manager in writing of the following details:
- your pregnancy
  - the EWC. This is the expected week in which the baby will be born and must be evidenced by the MAT B1 form, and
  - the date on which you intend to commence your

period of Ordinary Maternity Leave; this date may subsequently be changed provided 28 days advance notice is given (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

- 5.2 You must provide a MAT B1 form, which is the certificate from your doctor or midwife confirming the expected week of childbirth. The form must have either the doctor's name and address or the midwife's name and registration number on it.
- 5.3 The organisation will formally respond to you in writing within 28 days, confirming the date on which you are expected to return to work if you intend to take the full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave.

### 6. Starting maternity leave

- 6.1 The earliest date this leave can start is the beginning of the 11th week before the baby is due.
- 6.2 The Ordinary Maternity Leave period will be automatically triggered if:
- childbirth occurs earlier than the maternity leave period would otherwise start in which case maternity leave will begin the day after the baby is born, or
  - you are absent from work due to a pregnancy related illness in the four weeks or less before the EWC.
- 6.3 In these circumstances notification must occur as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

### 7. Time off for antenatal care

- 7.1 Once an employee has advised the organisation that they are pregnant they will be entitled to take a reasonable amount of paid time off for antenatal care as advised by their doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor.
- 7.2 The organisation reserves the right to ask for a certificate from their GP, midwife or health visitor confirming an appointment has been made.
- 7.3 The employee should endeavour to give her line manager as much notice as possible of antenatal appointments

and, whenever possible, try to arrange them as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

- 7.4 An expectant father or the partner of a pregnant employee, is entitled to unpaid time off to accompany the pregnant employee to up to two antenatal appointments. This time off is unpaid and is limited to seven and a half hours for each appointment.

## 8. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance (MA)

As the law obliges all employees to take a minimum of two weeks of maternity leave immediately after the birth of the child this period will be paid at your normal salary by The Childrens Trust, irrespective of the qualifiers for SMP or MA. After the first 2 weeks the below qualifiers will then apply for SMP and MA. This initial payment forms part of any MA but is not subject to clause 9.3.

- 8.1 To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) you must meet each of the following conditions:
- have been continuously employed at The Children's Trust with 26 weeks' service as at the 15th week before the start of the EWC, and
  - have normal weekly earnings of at least the lower earnings limit for the payment of National Insurance contributions (set by the government), for the period of eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the start of the EWC, and
  - have given at least 28 days' notice (or, if that is not possible, as much notice as you can) of your intention to take maternity leave, and
  - have stopped working.
- 8.2 If you comply with these requirements, you will be paid SMP at the following rates for 39 weeks:
- nine-tenths (90 %) of average weekly earnings for the first six weeks followed by
  - 33 weeks at the prescribed rate set by the government for the relevant tax year (or 90 % of average weekly earnings for the full 39 weeks if this is less than the prescribed rate set by the government).
- 8.3 SMP is subject to tax and national insurance deductions and will be paid on the normal pay day i.e. monthly in arrears.
- 8.4 Payment of SMP cannot start prior to the 11th week before the employee's expected week of childbirth. It can start from any day of the week in accordance with the date the employee starts their maternity leave.
- 8.5 If you leave employment for any reason after commencing your period of maternity leave (for example, if you resign or are made redundant) you will remain eligible for SMP.

- 8.6 If you do not qualify for SMP but have been employed for at least 26 weeks in the previous 66 weeks before the EWC and have average earnings over any 13 weeks in the 66 week period of more than £30 per week you will be eligible to receive a Maternity Allowance payable directly by the government.

## 9. Additional Maternity Pay (AMP)

- 9.1 To qualify for AMP in addition to SMP, you must meet each of the above conditions and in addition:
- have been continuously employed at The Children's Trust with 52 weeks' service as at the 15th week before the start of the EWC, and
  - agree to return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following maternity leave or following a period of holiday immediately after the end of your maternity leave.
- 9.2 If you comply with these requirements you will be paid AMP at the following rates:
- the first eight weeks at 90 % plus a 10 % top up to equal full pay (which includes SMP) followed by
  - 18 weeks at SMP plus 30 % of average weekly earnings, which includes SMP at the rate set by government (or 90 % of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate set by the government) followed by
  - 13 weeks SMP at the rate set by government (or 90 % of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate set by the government). Average weekly earnings are calculated over a period of eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the start of the EWC.
- 9.3 Should you not return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following maternity leave or following a period of holiday immediately after the end of your maternity leave, having accepted and received AMP as outlined above, you will be required to repay that amount which is in excess of SMP.

## 10. Terms and conditions during maternity leave

- 10.1 During Ordinary Maternity Leave and Additional Maternity Leave, your terms and conditions of employment will continue and where eligible you will continue to receive all contractual benefits with the exception of pay.
- 10.2 If you are a member of the pension scheme, the organisation's pension contributions will continue to be made at your normal contribution rate during the paid part of your maternity leave and will cease during any unpaid period of Additional Maternity Leave. Any employee pension contributions will be based on your earnings over the course of your maternity leave.

- 10.3 Your entitlement to receive childcare vouchers will continue as will use of the on-site nursery and use of a laptop (if applicable).
- 10.4 **Contractual annual leave will continue to accrue during the full duration of your maternity leave.** You are encouraged to take any leave accrued before commencing the maternity leave and on your return from maternity leave before returning to work. Annual leave accrued during the maternity leave period may be carried over to the next leave year in circumstances where it has not been possible to take the leave in the current leave year e.g. where the maternity leave period extends across two leave years.

## 11. Contact during maternity leave

- 11.1 The organisation reserves the right to maintain **reasonable contact with you during 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 to ease your return to work or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

## 12. Keeping in touch days

- 12.1 Except during the first two weeks after your child is born, you can agree to work (or attend training) at The Children's Trust for up to **10 days** during either Ordinary Maternity Leave, or Additional Maternity Leave without bringing your maternity leave to an end and without the loss of a week's SMP. These are known as **'keeping in touch' days**. They are intended to ensure that you are kept in touch with the changes and developments that are taking place in your workplace while you are on maternity leave and so that your transition back to work at the end of your maternity leave occurs smoothly.
- 12.2 The organisation has no right to require you to attend keeping in touch days and you have no right to undertake them during your maternity leave. Any work undertaken, and the amount of salary paid for any work done on keeping in touch days, is entirely a matter for agreement between you and the organisation.

## 13. Returning to work

- 13.1 If you wish to return to work after maternity leave you may do so by simply returning to work at the end of the maternity leave period.
- 13.2 **If you wish to return to work earlier, you must give your line manager at least eight weeks' written notice** of the date on which you intend to return. If you fail to give this notice The Children's Trust may postpone the return date to ensure that it has either the requisite eight weeks' notice or that you have reached the end of the maternity leave period (whichever is earlier).

- 13.3 If you return to work during or immediately after Ordinary Maternity Leave (26 weeks), you have the right to return to the same job in which you were employed before the period of leave.
- 13.4 After Additional Maternity Leave, you are entitled to return either to the same job or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another suitable alternative job that is on terms and conditions not less favourable.
- 13.5 Failure to return to work by the end of maternity leave will be treated as an unauthorised absence unless you are sick and will provide a current medical certificate before the end of your maternity leave period.
- 13.6 We will deal with any requests to change your working patterns (such as working part-time) after maternity leave under the Flexible working policy. All employees have the right to request flexible working as a day one right and we will give due consideration to your request in a reasonable manner and subject to business needs unless there are acceptable reasons for refusal.
- 13.7 If you decide not to return to work after you have taken maternity leave, you must give us notice of your resignation in writing as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

## 14. Apprenticeships

- 14.1 An apprentice is an employee with the same entitlements when it comes to pregnancy and maternity leave.

# Part B: Paternity leave and pay

## 1. Scope

This section sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take paternity leave.

## 2. Eligibility for paternity leave

- 2.1 An employee whose wife, civil partner or partner gives birth to a child, or who is the biological father of the child, is entitled to two weeks' paternity leave provided that they:
- have, or expect to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child and be making the request to help care for the child or to support the child's mother.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Parents who will become the legal parents of a child under a surrogacy arrangement and local authority foster parents who are also prospective adopters ('foster to adopt') are entitled to take paternity leave in relation to children matched with them.





### 3. Timing of leave

- 3.1 Paternity leave can be taken as either two consecutive weeks of leave or two separate blocks of one week of leave at any point in the first year. A week is the same number of days that you normally work in a week – for example, a week is two days if you only work on Mondays and Tuesdays. You can start paternity leave:
- the day your baby is born
  - from an agreed date within 52 weeks after your baby is born or was expected to be born
  - the day your adoption placement starts, or from an agreed date within 52 weeks after
  - the date your adopted child arrives in the UK or from an agreed date within 52 weeks after, for an overseas adoption
  - the day your surrogate baby is born or from an agreed date within 52 weeks after.
- 3.2 You are entitled to the same amount of leave irrespective of whether your partner has a multiple birth (such as twins).

### 4. Notification of paternity leave

- 4.1 Applicants must inform their manager, in writing, of their intention to take Ordinary Paternity Leave by the 15th week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You will need to notify in writing. This initial notice must state the date on which the baby is due.
- 4.2 You will also need to provide your manager with 28 days written notice before each period of leave that you will be requesting.
- 4.3 You cannot take paternity leave if you have already taken Shared Parental Leave (SPL) in respect of the same child. You may be eligible to take SPL after paternity leave (see Part D: Shared Parental Leave).
- 4.4 In addition to notifying your line manager as set out above” you must “also” request paternity leave and pay using form SC3, you can complete the online form by visiting the GOV.UK website. Employees having a baby through adoption or a surrogacy arrangement must use form SC4 to request leave and pay. Employees adopting a child from overseas must use the form SC5 to request leave and pay. All forms required can be located on the GOV.UK website.
- 4.5 In the case of an adopted child, you must give written notice, to your line manager, 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
  - the date on which you were notified of having been matched with the child.

### 5. Occupational paternity pay

- 5.1 Irrespective of Length of service, you will receive two weeks’ Occupational Paternity Pay at your normal average pay, if

you have over 26 weeks service this payment would include Statutory Paternity Pay.

- 5.2 Paternity pay is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and National Insurance deductions.
- 5.3 Paternity pay can start from any day of the week in accordance with the date you start your paternity leave.

## Part C: Adoption leave and pay

### 1. Scope

This section sets out the rights of employees to adoption leave and pay when adopting a child or have a child through a surrogacy arrangement or a 'foster to adopt' arrangement.

### 2. Adoption leave entitlement

- 2.1 All staff adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement or a 'foster to adopt' arrangement are entitled to up to **52 weeks' adoption leave from day one of their employment**. The first 26 weeks is known as Ordinary Adoption Leave, the last 26 weeks as Additional Adoption Leave.

### 3. Starting adoption leave

- 3.1 Adoption leave can start:
  - on the date the child starts living with you or up to 14 days before the expected placement date (UK adoptions)
  - when you have been matched with a child to be placed with you by a UK adoption agency
  - when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)
  - the day the child is born or the day after (parents in surrogacy arrangements)
  - no earlier than two weeks before the child is expected to be placed and no later than the date the child is placed (if you are an approved foster parent or a prospective adopter who has been notified that a child will be placed with you).
- 3.2 To make administration as easy as possible, you should discuss the timing of your adoption leave with your manager as early as possible.

### 4. Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

- 4.1 Employees who take adoption leave will also qualify for SAP, provided that:
  - you have 26 weeks' service ending with the week the official notification of the adoption was sent and
  - have average weekly earnings not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
- 4.2 Average weekly earnings are measured over the eight-week period ending with the week in which you are notified of being matched with the child for adoption.

- 4.3 SAP is payable for up to 39 weeks at:
  - 90 % of your gross average weekly earnings for the first six weeks
  - at the rate set by the government for the relevant tax year (or 90 % of normal earnings, if that is lower than the government's rate) the next 33 weeks.
- 4.4 SAP is subject to tax and National Insurance deductions and will be paid on the normal pay day ie monthly in arrears.

### 5. Additional Adoption Pay (AAP)

- 5.1 To qualify for AAP in addition to SAP, you must meet each of the above conditions and in addition:
  - you have 52 weeks' service ending with the week the official notification of the adoption was sent, and
  - agree to return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following adoption leave or a period of holiday absence immediately after the end of your adoption leave.
- 5.2 If you comply with these requirements you will be paid AAP at the following rates:
  - the first eight weeks at 90 % plus a 10 % top up to equal full pay (including SAP) followed by
  - 18 weeks at AAP plus 30 % of average weekly earnings, including SAP at the rate set by government (or 90 % of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate set by the government) followed by 13 weeks SAP at the rate set by government (or 90 % of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate set by the government).
- 5.3 Should you not return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following adoption leave or a period of holiday absence immediately after the end of your adoption leave, having accepted and received AAP as outlined above, you will be required to repay that amount which is in excess of SAP.

### 6. Notice requirements

- 6.1 To be entitled to take adoption leave and receive SAP you are required to give the organisation written notification of your intention to take adoption leave no later than 28 days after the date you receive the official notification unless the time between the child being matched and placed is less than that.
- 6.2 Within seven days of being matched with a child, you must tell us:
  - how much leave you wish to take
  - your leave start date
  - the 'date of placement' – the expected or actual date the child is placed with you.
- 6.3 If you are adopting a child from overseas, you must tell us the date of the notification and when you expect the child to arrive in the UK within 28 days of getting your 'official notification'. You must also tell us

the actual date the child arrives in the UK – within 28 days of this date.

- 6.4 If you are having a child through surrogacy arrangement you must tell us when the baby is due and when you want to start your leave at least 15 weeks before the due date.
- 6.5 If you are having a child within a ‘fostering to adopt’ arrangement you must tell us no later than 28 days after the date you receive the official notification.
- 6.6 You can bring forward or postpone your adoption leave start date, provided that you advise us in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 6.7 The People team will write to you confirming the latest date on which you must return to work after adoption leave within 28 days of receiving your notice of the date on which you intend to begin your adoption leave.

## 7. Terms and conditions during adoption leave

- 7.1 During Ordinary Adoption Leave and Additional Adoption Leave, your terms and conditions of employment will continue and where eligible you will continue to receive all contractual benefits with the exception of pay.
- 7.2 If you are a member of the pension scheme, the organisation’s pension contributions will continue to be made at your normal contribution rate during the paid part of your adoption leave and will cease during any unpaid period of Additional Adoption Leave.
- 7.3 Contractual annual leave will continue to accrue during the full duration of your adoption leave. You are encouraged to take any leave accrued before commencing the adoption leave.

## 8. Contact during adoption leave

- 8.1 The organisation reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during 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 to ease your return to work or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

## 9. Keeping in touch days

- 9.1 You may carry out up to **10 days’ work** during your statutory adoption leave period without bringing the adoption leave to an end. These are known as **‘keeping in touch’ days**. They are intended to ensure that you are kept in touch with the changes and developments that are taking place in your workplace while you are on adoption leave and so that your transition back to work at the end of your adoption leave occurs smoothly.
- 9.2 The organisation has no right to require you to attend keeping in touch days and you have no right to

undertake them during your adoption leave. Any work undertaken, and the amount of salary paid for any work done on keeping in touch days, is entirely a matter for agreement between you and the organisation.

## 10. Returning to work after adoption leave

- 10.1 You may return to work at any time during Ordinary Adoption Leave or Additional Adoption Leave, provided that you give the appropriate notification. You may take your full period of adoption leave entitlement and return to work at the end of this period. Alternatively, if you wish to return before the full period of adoption leave has elapsed, you must give your manager at least eight weeks’ notice in writing of the date on which you intend to return.
- 10.2 You have the right to resume working in the same job if returning to work from Ordinary Adoption Leave. If return 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.
- 10.3 Failure to return to work by the end of adoption leave will be treated as an unauthorised absence unless you are sick and will provide a current medical certificate before the end of your adoption leave period.
- 10.4 We will manage any requests to change your working patterns (such as working part-time) after adoption leave under the Flexible working policy. All employees have the right to request flexible working as a day one right and we will give due consideration to your request in a reasonable manner and subject to business needs unless there are acceptable reasons for refusal.
- 10.5 If you decide not to return to work after you have taken adoption leave, you must give us notice of your resignation in writing as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

# Part D: Shared Parental Leave and pay

## 1. Scope

This section sets out the rights of employees to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and pay, whether they are the mother or the partner.

- 1.1 SPL enables mothers to commit to ending their maternity leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as SPL and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from maternity leave and opt in to SPL and pay at a later date.
- 1.2 If you are the mother employed by the organisation, your partner must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take SPL set out in this policy to their own employer, which may have its own Shared Parental Leave



policy in place, if they want to take a period of SPL.

- 1.3 Similarly, if you are the partner employed by the organisation, the mother must (where relevant) submit any notifications to take SPL to their own employer.
- 1.4 **The mother and the partner should ensure that they are each liaising with their own employer to ensure that requests for SPL are handled as smoothly as possible.**

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 The following definitions are used in this policy:
  - 'Mother' means the mother or expectant mother of the child
  - 'Partner' means the father of the child, or the person who, at the date of the child's birth, is married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of the mother. This includes someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother and the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the mother's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew
  - 'Expected week of childbirth' (EWC) means the week, starting on a Sunday, during which the employee's doctor or midwife expects the baby to be born.

## 3. Amount of Shared Parental Leave available

- 3.1 The amount of SPL to which eligible employees are entitled will depend on when the mother brings their maternity leave period to an end and the amount of leave that the other parent takes in respect of the child.
- 3.2 SPL must be taken in blocks of at least one week. You can request to take SPL in one continuous block, in which case the request will be accepted as long as you meet the eligibility and notice requirements, or as a number of discontinuous blocks of leave, in which case you will need the organisation's agreement. A maximum of three requests for leave per pregnancy can normally be made by each parent.
- 3.3 The first two weeks following birth are the compulsory maternity leave period and are reserved for the mother. This means that the mother cannot curtail their maternity leave to take SPL until two weeks after the birth.

### **The maximum period that the parents could take as SPL is 50 weeks between them**

(although it may be less than this because of the maternity leave that mothers usually take before the birth).

- 3.4 The mother's partner can begin a period of SPL at any time after the first two weeks following the birth (but the partner should bear in mind that they are entitled to take up to two weeks' paternity leave following the birth of their child, which they will lose if SPL is taken first). The mother and partner must take any SPL within 52 weeks of birth.

## 4. Eligibility for Shared Parental Leave

- 4.1 For employees to be eligible to take SPL, both parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

### **Mother's eligibility for SPL**

The mother is eligible for SPL if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with the organisation until the week before any period of SPL that they take
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child
- are entitled to statutory maternity leave in respect of the child, and
- comply with the relevant maternity leave curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave), and SPL notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the mother to be eligible for SPL, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks, and
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child.

- 4.2 **Partner's eligibility for Shared Parental Leave**

The partner is eligible for SPL if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with the organisation until the week before any period of SPL that they take
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child, and
- comply with the relevant SPL notice and evidence requirements.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible for SPL, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child
- be entitled to Statutory Maternity Leave, Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance in respect of the child, and

- comply with the relevant maternity leave or pay curtailment requirements (or have returned to work before the end of statutory maternity leave).

## 5. Notice requirements for Shared Parental Leave

5.1 The notices that the parents must give to be able to take SPL are made up of three elements. They are:

- a 'maternity leave curtailment notice' from the mother setting out when they propose to end their maternity leave (unless the mother has already returned to work from maternity leave)
- a 'notice of entitlement and intention' from the employee giving an initial, non-binding indication of each period of SPL that they are requesting, and
- 'period of leave notice' from the employee setting out the start and end dates of each period of SPL that they are requesting.

### 5.2 **Mother's notice curtailing maternity leave**

Before the mother or partner can take SPL, the mother must either return to work before the end of their maternity leave (by giving the required eight weeks' notice of their planned return) or provide their employer with a maternity leave curtailment notice. The maternity leave curtailment notice must be in writing and state the date on which maternity leave is to end.

That date must be:

- after the compulsory maternity leave period, which is the two weeks after birth
- at least eight weeks after the date on which the mother gave the maternity leave curtailment notice, and
- at least one week before what would be the end of the Additional Maternity Leave period.

5.3 The mother must provide their maternity leave curtailment notice at the same time they provide either their notice of entitlement and intention or a declaration of consent and entitlement signed by the mother confirming that their partner has given their employer a notice of entitlement and intention.

### 5.4 **Employee's notice of entitlement and intention**

The employee, whether the mother or the partner, must provide the organisation with a non-binding notice of entitlement and intention. The employee's notice of entitlement and intention, which must be in writing and provided at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL to be taken by the employee, must set out the following information.

5.4 If the employee is the mother, the notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the mother's name
- the partner's name
- the start and end dates of any statutory maternity leave taken or to be taken by the mother
- the total amount of shared parental leave available
- the child's expected week of birth and the child's date of birth (although, if the child has not yet been born, the date of birth can be provided as soon as

reasonably practicable after birth, and before the first period of SPL to be taken by the mother)

- how much SPL the mother and partner each intend to take, and
- a non-binding indication as to when the employee intends to take SPL (including the start and end dates for each period of leave).

The mother's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by them that:

- they satisfy, or will satisfy, the eligibility requirements to take SPL
- the information they give in the notice of entitlement and intention is accurate, and
- they will immediately inform the organisation if they cease to care for the child.

In addition, the mother's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by their partner:

- specifying the partner's name, address, and National Insurance number (or declaring that the partner does not have a National Insurance number)
- declaring that the partner satisfies, or will satisfy, the conditions set out above (see mother's eligibility for SPL)
- declaring that the partner is the father of the child, or is married to, the civil partner of or the partner of the mother
- declaring that the partner consents to the amount of leave that the mother intends to take, and
- declaring that the partner consents to the mother's employer processing the information in the partner's declaration.

5.6 If the employee is the partner, the partner's notice of entitlement and intention must set out:

- the partner's name
- the mother's name
- the start and end dates of any periods of Statutory Maternity Leave, Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance taken or to be taken by the mother
- the total amount of SPL available
- the child's expected week of birth and the child's date of birth (although, if the child has not yet been born, the date of birth can be provided as soon as reasonably practicable after birth, and before the first period of SPL to be taken by the partner)
- how much SPL the partner and mother each intend to take, and
- a non-binding indication as to when the partner intends to take SPL (including the start and end dates for each period of leave).

The partner's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by the partner that:

- they satisfy, or will satisfy, the eligibility requirements to take SPL
- the information given by the partner in the notice of entitlement and intention is accurate, and
- they will immediately inform the organisation if they cease to care for the child or if the mother informs

them that they no longer meets the requirement to have curtailed their maternity leave or pay period.

In addition, the partner's notice of entitlement and intention must include a declaration signed by the mother:

- specifying the mother's name, address, and National Insurance number (or declaring that the mother does not have a National Insurance number)
- declaring that the mother satisfies, or will satisfy, the conditions set out above and they will notify the partner if they no longer qualifies for maternity leave, Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance
- declaring that the mother consents to the amount of leave that the partner intends to take
- declaring that they will immediately inform the employee if they no longer meets the requirement to have curtailed their maternity leave or pay period, and
- declaring that the mother consents to the partner's employer processing the information in the mother's declaration.

- 5.7 Within 14 days of receiving a notice of entitlement and intention from you, whether the mother or partner, the organisation can request from you:
- a copy of the child's birth certificate (or, if the child has not been born, a copy of the birth certificate within 14 days of the birth – if the birth certificate has yet to be issued after this period, a signed declaration stating the date and location of the child's birth will suffice), and
  - the name and address of the other parent's employer (or a declaration that the other parent has no employer).

- 5.8 You have 14 days from the date of the request to send the organisation the required information.

5.9 **Employee's period of leave notice**

To take a period of SPL, you must provide the organisation with a written notice setting out the start and end dates of each period of SPL requested in that notice.

- 5.10 A period of leave notice must be given not less than eight weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL requested in the notice. The notice may be given at the same time as a notice of entitlement and intention and can be a request for a continuous period of leave or discontinuous periods of leave.

5.11 **Variation or cancellation of period of leave notice**

You can vary or cancel your proposed SPL dates following the submission of a period of leave notice, provided that you provide a written notice not less than eight weeks before any period of leave varied or cancelled by the notice is due to commence.

## 6. Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SSPP)

- 6.1 SSPP is available for eligible parents to share between them while on SPL. The number of weeks' SSPP available to the parents will depend on how much SMP the mother has been paid when their maternity leave or pay period ends.





6.2 A total of 39 weeks' SMP is available to the mother. As there is a compulsory maternity leave period of two weeks, this means that a mother who ends their maternity leave at the earliest opportunity could share up to 37 weeks' SSPP with their partner. Although it will normally be less than this because of the maternity leave that mothers usually take before the birth.

6.3 For employees to be eligible for SSPP, both parents must meet certain eligibility requirements.

#### 6.4 **Mother's eligibility for SSPP**

The mother is eligible for SSPP if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with their employer until the week before any period of shared parental pay that they get
- have normal weekly earnings for a period of eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contribution purposes
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child
- are absent from work and intend to care for the child during each week in which they receive SSPP, and
- are entitled to SMP in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period has been reduced.

In addition, for the mother to be eligible for SSPP, the partner must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child, and
- have average weekly earnings of at least the Maternity Allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks.

#### 6.5 **Partner's eligibility for SSPP**

The partner is eligible for SSPP if they:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and remain in continuous employment with their employer until the week before any period of shared parental pay that they get
- have normal weekly earnings for eight weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth of at least the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contribution purposes
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the mother, for the care of the child and
- are absent from work and intends to care for the child during each week in which they receive SSPP.

In addition, for the partner to be eligible, the mother must:

- have been employed or been a self-employed earner

during at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately preceding the expected week of childbirth

- have average weekly earnings of at least the Maternity Allowance (MA) threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks
- have, at the date of the child's birth, the main responsibility, apart from the partner, for the care of the child, and
- be entitled to SMP or MA in respect of the child, but the maternity pay period or MA period has been reduced.

6.6 Any SSPP due during SPL will be paid at a rate set by the government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the government's set weekly rate.

6.7 It is up to the parents as to who is paid the statutory shared parental pay and how it is apportioned between them.

### 7. Additional Shared Parental Pay

7.1 To qualify for Additional Shared Parental Pay (ASPP), you must meet each of the above conditions and in addition:

- have been continuously employed at The Children's Trust with 52 weeks' service as at the 15th week before the start of the expected week of childbirth (EWC), and
- agree to return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following SPL or a period of holiday absence immediately after the end of your SPL.

7.2 If you comply with these requirements you will be paid ASPP at the same rates as AMP unless you have already benefited from AMP in relation to the same child.

7.3 Employees who take a period of maternity leave followed by one or more periods of SPL are entitled to a maximum of eight weeks at full pay and 18 weeks at 30% of average weekly earnings. Any remaining weeks of SSPP after this period will be paid at the rate set by government (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate set by the government), when any periods of additional maternity and shared parental pay are combined.

7.4 Should you not return to employment with The Children's Trust for at least three months following maternity leave, shared parental leave or a period of holiday absence immediately after the end of your SPL, having accepted and received ASPP as outlined above, you will be required to repay that amount which is in excess of SMP or SSPP.

### 8. Terms and conditions during Shared Parental Leave

8.1 During SPL your terms and conditions of employment will continue and where eligible you will continue to receive all contractual benefits with the exception of pay.

8.2 If you are a member of the pension scheme, the organisation's pension contributions will continue to

be made at your normal contribution rate during the paid part of your SPL and will cease during any unpaid period of SPL.

- 8.3 Your entitlement to receive childcare vouchers will continue as will use of the on-site nursery and use of a company laptop (if applicable).
- 8.4 Contractual annual leave will continue to accrue for the duration of any period of SPL. You are encouraged to take any leave accrued before commencing SPL. Annual leave accrued during the SPL period may be carried over to the next leave year in circumstances where it has not been possible to take the leave in the current leave year e.g. where the SPL period extends across two leave years.

## 9. Contact during Shared Parental Leave

- 9.1 The organisation reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during SPL. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

## 10. Shared Parental Leave 'keeping in touch' days

- 10.1 You can agree to work for the organisation (or to attend training) for up to **20 days** during SPL without bringing the period of your SPL and pay to an end. These are known as 'Shared Parental Leave In Touch' (SPLIT) days.
- 10.2 The organisation has no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any SPLIT days during your SPL. Any work undertaken, and the amount of salary paid for any work done on SPLIT days, is entirely a matter for agreement between you and the organisation.

## 11. Returning to work

- 11.1 You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from SPL if the period of leave, when added to any other period of SPL, statutory maternity leave or statutory paternity leave taken in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.
- 11.2 If you return to work from shared parental leave and the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to any other period of SPL, statutory maternity or paternity leave taken in relation to the same child, or was the last of two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave that included a period of ordinary parental leave of more than four weeks, or a period of Additional Maternity Leave, you have the right to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable.  
  
In these circumstances, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another suitable job that is on terms and conditions not less favourable.
- 11.3 We will manage any requests to change your working patterns (such as working part-time) after SPL under

the Flexible working policy. All employees have the right to request flexible working as a day one right. We will give due consideration to your request in a reasonable manner and subject to business needs unless there are acceptable reasons for refusal.

- 11.4 If you decide not to return to work after you have taken SPL, you must give us **notice of your resignation in writing** as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment.

# Part E: Ordinary parental leave

## 1. Scope

This section sets out the rights of employees to ordinary parental leave.

- 1.1 **Ordinary parental leave is unpaid.** Its aim is to help employees reconcile their occupational and family obligations and to promote equal opportunities and treatment between all genders. Parental leave is designed to be taken to look after the child or to make arrangements for the good of the child. It should not be confused with the entitlement to time off for dependants, which is outlined later.
- 1.2 Parental leave is for each child; so for example, if twins are born each parent is entitled to request 18 weeks leave for each child.

## 2. Ordinary parental leave entitlement

- 2.1 The right to parental leave will apply if you:
  - **have a minimum of one year's continuous service** with our organisation by the time you take the leave, and
  - have, or expect to have, parental responsibility for the child.
- 2.2 We may ask to see evidence that you are the parent or the person legally responsible for the child.

## 3. Amount of ordinary parental leave you can take

- 3.1 **You can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, subject to a maximum of four weeks' leave for each child in any one-year period.**
- 3.2 You must take ordinary parental leave in blocks of at least one week. However, if your child has a disability, you can take the leave one day at a time. Parental leave taken in blocks of more than one week will need to be discussed with your line manager and must follow the notice requirements, as set out below.
- 3.3 Your entitlement to ordinary parental leave carries over from your previous employment. This means that, if you have taken ordinary parental leave with a previous employer:
  - you can take the balance with our organisation, but

you must wait until you have worked for us for at least one year, and

- we will ask you about the amount of ordinary parental leave already taken for your child with your previous employers.

#### 4. Notice requirements

- 4.1 A minimum of 21 days' notice is required before any period of parental leave. If you wish to take more than two weeks off at a time the notice you must give will be double the amount of the requested leave.

#### 5. Terms and conditions during ordinary parental leave

- 5.1 Your terms and conditions of employment will remain as normal throughout the period of ordinary parental leave, except for those relating to wages or salaries. Parental leave is unpaid.
- 5.2 If your parental leave lasts for four weeks or less you have the right to return to the job in which you were employed before the period of leave.
- 5.3 Where parental leave is longer, if it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same job, you will be offered a similar post which has the same or better status, terms and conditions.
- 5.4 Where parental leave follows Ordinary Maternity Leave, you are entitled to return to the same post. However, where parental leave follows Additional Maternity Leave, and it is not reasonably practicable to return to the same post at the end of maternity leave, you are entitled to return only to a similar post that has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old post.

#### 6. Postponing your ordinary parental leave

- 6.1 While our aim is to agree to your request for ordinary parental leave, there are circumstances in which we may need to postpone the start date. We will do this only if your absence would cause undue disruption to our services, and will give you written notice of the postponement no more than seven days after we received your request. If parental leave needs to be delayed you will be given a suggested new date, which would be within six months of the requested start date but the amount of leave requested will not be changed.
- 6.2 However, we will never postpone your period of ordinary parental leave if the leave starts on the birth of your child or your child's placement with you for adoption.

## Part F: Neonatal leave and pay

### 1. Scope

This section sets out the rights to neonatal leave and pay for parents whose baby are born on or after 6th April 2025 and requires neonatal care in hospital.

- 1.1 This could be after a premature birth or where the baby is born with a congenital condition, there are complications at birth, or the baby is 'experiencing serious health conditions shortly after birth'.

### 2. Eligibility for neonatal leave

- 2.1 Neonatal leave and pay is restricted to the individuals who have the main responsibility for caring for the child following birth, had the child not been admitted to neonatal care. Eligible individuals are:
- the mother
  - the father
  - the mother's spouse, civil partner or a partner who will be living with the mother and baby that is in neonatal care in an enduring family relationship
  - intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement, and
  - intended parents in cases of adoption, where the intention is that the child be placed with them at birth or shortly after birth.
- 2.2 For employees to be eligible to take neonatal leave the baby would have to be in neonatal care within 28 days of birth and the admission last for a continuous period of seven days or more.
- 2.3 Neonatal leave is a 'day one' right and no qualifying period is required.

### 3. Amount of leave

- 3.1 Parents will be eligible to take up to 12 weeks of leave and, if eligible, pay, on top of any other leave they may be entitled to, including Maternity and paternity leave.
- Eligible employees have the right to take one week neonatal leave for every week their child spends in neonatal care capped at a maximum of twelve weeks.
- Provided the employee meets the eligibility criteria, the statutory payment will be either the flat rate defined by the government or 90 % of average earnings calculated over a set reference period, whichever is the lower whilst absent from work.
- Additional Neonatal pay will be applied by The Children's Trust to top up the statutory payment to 100 % contracted pay for up to a maximum of 2 weeks. From week 3 neonatal leave will revert back to the defined rate by the government for up to a further 10 weeks.
- 3.2 Neonatal leave is an additional family friendly entitlement and would not directly affect maternity and paternity leave:



- for mothers, neonatal leave is an additional period of time added to the end of their maternity leave
- for fathers or partners who are eligible for paternity leave, neonatal leave can be taken at the end of their paternity leave.

#### 4. Notice requirements

- 4.1 To be entitled to take neonatal leave and receive neonatal pay you are required to give the organisation written notification of your intention to take neonatal leave as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### 5. Employment protections

Parents who qualify for neonatal care leave will be afforded the same employment rights and protections as parents taking other relevant family related leave. This means that they will be protected from detriment or discrimination arising from them taking, or seeking to take, neonatal care leave. Employees who are eligible for neonatal care leave will also have a right to return to the same job after a period of neonatal care leave or a combined period of neonatal and other forms of qualifying family related statutory leave if they are absent from work for a period of 26 weeks or less.

## Part G: Time off to care for dependants

### 1. Scope

This section explains the right to take time off to manage unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

- 1.1 You may take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off in order to take necessary action:
- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill (physical or mental), gives birth, is injured or assaulted
  - to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured or to cope with

unexpected disruptions in such care arrangements

- as a result of the death of a dependant, or
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving your child during a time when an educational establishment is responsible for the child.

### 2. Dependants

- 2.1 A dependant is defined as a spouse, child, parent or someone living in the same household as you (but not as an employee, tenant or lodger).
- 2.2 Where the time off is due to the need for assistance on occasions of illness, injury or assault, or relates to the provision of care arrangements for someone who is ill or injured then the definition of dependants extends to any person who reasonably relies on you for assistance or in relation to care arrangements.

### 3. Notification

- 3.1 If you need to take time off for dependants, you should contact your line manager at the earliest opportunity. If you become aware of an emergency situation while at work, you should immediately speak to your line manager about leaving work early. You should explain:
- the reason for the absence, and
  - how long you expect to be absent from work and agree absence with your manager.
- 3.2 If your line manager is unavailable, you must speak to an equivalent or more senior manager. If you are unable to contact the manager before taking time off for dependants, you should contact the manager as soon as possible.

## Part H: Breastfeeding and expressing milk

### 1. Introduction

This policy explains the support available to staff who are breastfeeding.

We are committed to creating an open and supportive culture. We recognise that on your return to work from maternity leave you may still be breastfeeding or expressing breast milk during the day to give to your baby later on, which also counts as breastfeeding.

We understand that for some breastfeeding can be a difficult subject to discuss. However, we encourage you to ask for any support that you need at work to help you while you are on your breastfeeding journey.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

## 3. Requesting support

If you are breastfeeding and require support at work, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to a member of the HRBP team.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any help that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or the HRBP's will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

## 4. Working flexibly on a temporary basis

For employees eligible to request flexible working, who require a permanent change to working arrangements, please refer to the Flexible working section within the handbook.

We recognise that for individuals who are breastfeeding, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include:

- working from home so that you can breastfeed your baby if you live close to your childcare setting
- changing your start and finish times where you have an established breastfeeding routine
- taking more frequent breaks so that you can express milk, or
- taking more frequent breaks so that you can breastfeed if your baby attends the onsite nursery.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because you are breastfeeding, you should discuss and agree this with your line manager.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.

## 5. Private space

If you are breastfeeding you may ask for a private, hygienic, safe and secure area where you can express milk. This could be an unoccupied office or an area used for meetings that can be discreetly screened. Your line manager will discuss and agree with you what space would be most appropriate and identify

facilities for washing, sterilising and storing containers. In any event it would be inappropriate to use toilets.

## 6. Storage

There is access to fridges across the site at Tadworth and within retail shops. The most suitable fridge to store your milk will be discussed and agreed with your line manager. The designated fridge should have a regular cleaning programme and have its temperature monitored.

It is recommended that expressed milk is placed within a labelled box within the refrigerator, supplied by the employee, and placed at the back of the fridge to avoid temperature fluctuations.

We request that expressed milk is taken home daily and not stored onsite for more than 24 hours.



# Flexible working

## Introduction

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing working practices and policies that support work-life balance. The organisation recognises that a better work-life balance can increase staff motivation, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

The organisation is committed to providing the widest possible range of appropriate working patterns, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met. Employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is requested, the organisation will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability, and
- health and safety issues.

## 1. Eligibility

- 1.1 At the Children's Trust all employees have the right to request flexible working, as a day one right. Under this procedure, you can make two requests in every 12-month period, which will run from 1 April to 31 March each year. If you have submitted a flexible working request, you must wait until that one has been considered and any appeal has been dealt with, before submitting another.

## 2. Submitting a flexible working request

- 2.1 An eligible employee is entitled to submit two flexible working request in a 12-month period, between 1 April to 31 March every year. All requests must be made in writing by filling in the requisite application form, which is available from The Loop. Any request made under this procedure should include:
  - a. a statement that it is a flexible working request
  - b. the date of the application
  - c. the changes that you are seeking to your terms and conditions of employment
  - d. the date on which you would like the terms and conditions to come into effect
  - e. the dates of any previous application for flexible working, and
  - f. if you are making the request in relation to the Equality Act e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

## 3. Response to an application

- 3.1 Where necessary, upon receipt of the application, your line manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the working arrangements you have requested. You will be



able to explain how the arrangements will accommodate your needs. If we cannot accommodate the arrangements you have requested, discussion at the meeting also provides an opportunity to explore possible alternative working arrangements.

- 3.2 At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative.
- 3.3 Where a request can be approved in the terms stated in your written application, without further discussion, a meeting will not be necessary and the decision will be notified in writing as soon as possible.

#### 4. Outcome of a flexible working request

- 4.1 If your request is accepted, we will write to you as soon as is reasonably practicable with details of the new working arrangements and the date on which they will commence.
- 4.2 If we cannot immediately accept your request we may require you to undertake a trial period before reaching a final decision on your request.
- 4.3 Unless otherwise agreed, changes to your terms of employment will be permanent.
- 4.4 There will be circumstances where, due to business and operational requirements, your manager will be unable to agree to a request and meet with you to provide the business reason(s) for the rejection of your application. Once a decision to reject an application has been made line managers will consult the HR Business Partnering Team before writing to the employee to ensure clear business grounds have been provided.

Your request may be rejected for one or more of the following reasons:

- the burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work, and
- a planned structural change to the business.

#### 5. Timescales

- 5.1 All requests will be dealt within two months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal. Your line manager should hold the meeting within 28 days of receiving your request and notify the decision to you within 14 days of the meeting, so that there is enough time for any appeal to be concluded. These time limits may be extended where you and your line manager are in agreement.

#### 6. Appeal

- 6.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to appeal the decision and may lodge an appeal within seven days of the notification. This

should be done in writing and clearly state the grounds on which you are appealing.

- 6.2 The appeal will be heard within 14 days. Where possible, the appeal meeting will be conducted by a manager who has not been previously involved in considering your request.
- 6.3 You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal in writing within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended where you and your line manager are in agreement.
- 6.4 If your appeal is upheld, you will be advised of your new working arrangements, the date on which they will commence and details of any trial period.
- 6.5 If your appeal is rejected, you will be able to make one other formal request within the same 12-month period.
- 6.6 If you fail to attend your scheduled appeal hearing, without good reason, it will be rescheduled one further time. If you fail to attend the rescheduled hearing, we will treat your application as withdrawn.

#### 7. Informal requests

Employees who are ineligible to make a formal request for flexible working, i.e. already submitted the maximum of two requests in a calendar year, are not entitled to make any informal request for flexible working.



# Holiday and other leave

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## General

We all need a break from work, therefore, The Children's Trust encourages all employees to take their full annual leave entitlement. The organisation's annual leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Your basic annual leave entitlement is 262.5 hours/35 days, (full-time equivalent) inclusive of bank and public holidays; your entitlement will be pro-rated based on your working hours. You will not automatically be entitled to take leave on bank or public holidays.

Annual leave entitlement accrues at the rate of one twelfth of your annual entitlement for each month of service. You are required to take your leave between those dates as any untaken leave may be forfeited. In exceptional circumstances, you may be permitted to carry over a maximum of five days (pro-rata) untaken leave from one holiday year to the next, but only with the express written approval of your Director. However, the carry over of leave will not be permitted in respect of any additional entitlement for long service. Permitted carry over leave must be taken by 30 April in the next leave year or it will be lost. The Children's Trust reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to the Holiday and Leave entitlements, and will where possible consult with all relevant stakeholders, unless in exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic.

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## Additional entitlement for long service

We like to celebrate with our employees and recognise their service and commitment, so the organisation will award an additional two days of annual leave on the first full leave year following the completion of two years' service. After the full year following 5 years' service another two additional days will be awarded, followed by an additional two days upon completion of 10 years' service. Those on term time contracts are excluded from the long service entitlement.

Completed less than two years' service	<b>35 days</b>
Two+ years' service	<b>37 days</b>
Five+ years' service	<b>39 days</b>
10+ years' service	<b>41 days</b>

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## Teacher's annual leave entitlement

There is no provision for annual leave entitlement for teachers; annual leave for teachers coincides with periods of school closure and public holidays. Any leave is taken in accordance with the termly division of the school year. Except in cases of serious urgency, no teacher may, without previous permission, be absent from duty for any reason other than personal illness. ***Please note that teachers are not entitled to any additional long service annual leave award.***

Teachers' regular hours will be worked across a 39-week period (term time), which includes five inset days. Your leave entitlement accrued over this period has been factored into your annual pay. You are not permitted to take leave during term time.

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## Approving annual leave

All annual leave dates must be approved in advance by your line manager. You must ensure you make a request in writing and that any approved annual leave is recorded on our online portal. As much notice as possible of proposed annual leave dates must be given to ensure adequate staffing coverage at all times.

There may be circumstances where we cannot grant the request, such as operational/staffing requirements, therefore you should not enter into binding contracts e.g. payment of a deposit, without ensuring that your leave has been approved.

If you incur costs and make commitments prior to receiving confirmation, The Children's Trust is not liable for any loss incurred as a result of this. However, where you have entered into a binding contract or incurred a cost after your line

manager has approved your annual leave, and this leave is subsequently cancelled, The Children's Trust will reimburse any costs incurred. This payment will be made through the relevant department's budget.

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## Annual leave during probationary period

During the probationary period, you will not normally be allowed to take annual leave in excess of days accrued. However, if during your recruitment process you notified the interviewer that you had pre-booked annual leave, we will normally allow such leave to be taken, dependant on the operational/staffing requirements. Payment of any reasonable pre-booked annual leave within probation period will be made.

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## Annual leave pay and payment in lieu

Annual leave pay is calculated on the basis of your current basic rate of pay (i.e. basic excluding any enhanced payments or overtime).

The organisation does not make any payment in lieu of annual leave. Payment in lieu of annual leave may only be made in exceptional circumstances, with the written approval of the Director of Resources.

The organisation will only make a payment in lieu of accrued but untaken annual leave on the termination of your contract. Should annual leave already taken exceed your entitlement, the organisation shall require you to repay an amount equivalent to your salary for the number of hours by which you have exceeded your entitlement. The organisation reserves the right to deduct this sum from your final salary payment.

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## Amount of leave

Under normal circumstances any annual leave period may not exceed two consecutive weeks at any one time. If you require leave in excess of two weeks you must obtain written authorisation from your line manager.

In the case of staff working on a shift rota any annual leave period may not include more than two weekends except with the express permission of the line manager concerned.



## Bank and public holidays

Due to the nature of our services, The Children's Trust does not normally close all its services on bank or public holidays. Where you may be required to work on these days, you will be notified by your line manager and you will be paid according to the rates set out in your employment contract. You will not be able to take forward an extra day of annual leave where you work on a bank holiday.

Where a department does close on public holidays, you will be required to take this as part of your paid leave entitlement.

The number of bank and public holidays may vary each holiday year between April and March dependant on where the Easter bank Holidays fall. Where this does happen, your annual leave entitlements will remain unchanged. Over the period of two years, bank holidays will balance equally as one year there is one less bank holiday and the following year there is an additional day.

Where additional bank holidays are announced by the government, above those already recognised in England, The Children's Trust will take the below approach:

Additional Bank Holiday	
Non-Working day - non shift worker	Maximum 7.5 hours added to annual holiday entitlement and pro-rata for staff that work less than 37.5 hours/week.
Non-working day - shift workers	Maximum 7.5 hours added to annual holiday entitlement and pro-rata for staff that work less than 37.5 hours/week.
Working day - shift workers	Maximum 7.5 hours added to annual holiday entitlement and pro-rata for staff that work less than 37.5 hours/week. Additional Bank holiday pay applied as per contractual terms for hours worked on the additional Bank holiday.
Working day - non shift workers	A maximum 7.5 hours added to annual holiday entitlement and pro-rata for staff that work less than 37.5 hours/week.

Any hours added to annual leave due to additional bank holidays cannot be carried over from one holiday year to the next.

## Annual leave and notice periods

Employees leaving the charity will be entitled to payment for the annual leave accrued during the leave year up to the date of leaving, less any annual leave taken. Any additional annual leave entitlement due to long service will be pro-rated and calculated based on the start of the current leave year and the date of leaving. Accrued annual leave entitlement can be used as part of the period of notice and the same associated rules and approvals

apply. Where possible and with the line manager's approval all accrued annual leave should be taken prior to the date of leaving. The Children's Trust may, in some circumstances, provide the necessary notice to enforce the taking of annual leave during a notice period.

## Absences and annual leave

### Sickness during annual leave

If you should fall ill before you are due to start your annual leave and you inform your manager immediately, the charity may at its discretion treat that absence as sick leave and further annual leave may be granted at a time to be agreed with your manager. As a general rule, once annual leave has started no claim for sickness will be considered. However, if you are prevented from going on leave because of serious illness or injury, the charity may at its discretion be prepared to treat that leave (or part of that leave) as sick leave provided that you are able to provide medical evidence satisfactory to the charity.

### Annual leave entitlement on long-term sickness

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their full statutory annual leave entitlement. The organisation will allow an employee to take their annual leave entitlement while on sick leave. Staff wishing to take annual leave while on sick leave should acquire the approval of all leave dates in accordance with the organisation's normal procedure. Any carry over leave from one leave year to the next will be at the statutory minimum of 5.6 weeks i.e. 28 days (pro-rated for part-time staff) as per the Working Time Regulations 1998.

### Accrual of annual leave during maternity leave

Contractual annual leave will continue to accrue during the full duration of your maternity leave. For more information see the Family friendly section.

## Additional leave requests

### Time off for fertility treatment

#### 1. Scope

The organisation will grant up to three days paid leave (pro-rated for part-time staff), for any single fertility treatment. This leave can be taken either as a full day or a few hours. Time off for fertility treatment up to the permitted number of days will be paid at your normal rate of basic pay. Any further addition to this allowance would be at the discretion of your Director in consultation with the Director of Resources. You will also be entitled to take a reasonable amount of paid time off to attend medical appointments. We expect staff to make every effort to

ensure that any appointments take place before or after the working day. Where this is not possible, staff will need to make sure appointments are arranged to minimise disruption to work i.e. at start or end of working day.

- 1.2 In order to qualify for time off under this policy, you must have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service.
- 1.3 If you wish to take time off for fertility treatment you must:
  - inform your line manager as soon as your plans to undergo fertility treatment have been confirmed
  - provide a statement from a qualified medical practitioner that fertility treatment has been recommended and approved
  - (at the request of your line manager) produce an appointment card for each occasion on which time off is requested
  - try to arrange appointments at times that will cause the minimum amount of inconvenience to the organisation, and
  - give as much notice as possible of the days on which time off is required.
- 1.4 If you require time off beyond the permitted number of days, you may agree with your line manager to take time off out of your annual leave entitlement or unpaid leave for this purpose.
- 1.5 If you become pregnant through IVF, you have all the same pregnancy and maternity rights as non-IVF pregnancies.
- 1.6 You have pregnancy rights once you have had the last part of the IVF process ('embryo transfer') when the fertilised ova are implanted and might become pregnant. Please refer to the Maternity leave and pay policy for further details once you have become pregnant.

## Parental bereavement leave and pay

### 1. Scope

We recognise that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child is among the most devastating events that an employee can ever face. The organisation is committed to supporting employees through their grief by ensuring that bereaved parents can take parental bereavement leave.

### 2. Eligibility for parental bereavement leave

- 2.1 This policy applies to employees who have suffered the loss of a child under the age of 18 on or after 6 April 2020. The policy also applies to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.
- 2.2 You can take parental bereavement leave, whatever your length of service if you are the:
  - parent of a child who has passed away, or
  - partner of the child's parent, where you live in an enduring family relationship with the child who has

passed away and their parent, or

- 'parent in fact' of a child who has passed away, which means that, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, you have been living with the child and had 'day-to-day responsibility' for the child (but you have not been paid to look after the child), or
- 'intended parent' of a child who has passed away, i.e. a parent using a surrogate, or
- 'natural parent' of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e. where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent, or
- adopter of a child who has passed away.

### 3. Amount of leave

- 3.1 For each child who has passed away, you can take up to two weeks' parental bereavement leave, not individual days. If you are a bereaved parent, you are able to take the leave as:

- a single block of two weeks or
- two separate blocks of one week at different times.

- 3.2 You must take the leave within 56 weeks of the date of the death of your child. This lengthy

period recognises that, as a bereaved parent, you may need some flexibility as to when you take the leave.

For example, you may:

- wish to take leave around the first anniversary of your child's death or at another particular time that is special, such as your child's birthday or
- already be on another type of leave, such as maternity leave or sickness absence.

### 4. Notice requirements

- 4.1 If you intend to take parental bereavement leave within the first eight weeks after your child's death, you can take the leave straightaway. You do not have to provide a period of notice. This means that you can begin parental bereavement leave by letting your line manager know no later than when you are due to start work or, if that is not feasible, as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.2 If you intend to take parental bereavement leave more than eight weeks after your child's death, you have to give your line manager at least one week's notice of your intention to take parental bereavement leave.

### 5. Parental bereavement pay

- 5.1 We recognise the need to provide bereaved parents with as much support as possible, and we will continue to pay normal pay during your leave.

### 6. Terms and conditions during parental bereavement leave

- 6.1 During parental bereavement leave, your terms and conditions of employment will continue and where eligible you will continue to receive all contractual benefits.

## 7. Returning to work

- 7.1 You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from parental bereavement leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or SPL) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.
- 7.2 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, if the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to most other periods of statutory leave taken in relation to the same child.

## Carer's leave

### 1. Scope

This section sets out our commitment to supporting carers and the assistance that we offer to combine work with care. The organisation values the vital contribution made by carers in supporting some of the most vulnerable in society and wants to recognise their important contribution to the workplace.

### 2. Definition of carers

- 2.1 We define carers as employees with significant caring responsibilities that have a substantial impact on their working life. The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including:

- help with personal care
- help with mobility
- managing medication
- practical household tasks
- emotional support and
- help with financial matters or administration.

Where possible we would request evidence of your carer status. However, in many cases we understand that you may not be a registered carer.

### 3. Carer's circumstances

- 3.1 We recognise that carer's needs are different from the needs of employees with routine childcare responsibilities, and the circumstances and milestones of caring are different from those of routine childcare.

You may acquire caring responsibilities overnight, for example where your parent has a stroke, or your caring responsibilities may develop over time, for example where your partner has a debilitating long-term health condition.

- 3.2 Employees with caring responsibilities cannot always plan ahead for time off. The ability to take leave in an emergency is important for carers, who may be called on at short notice.

In addition to your right to carer's leave, you also have the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to assist or make arrangements for the care of your dependants in an emergency. If you wish to take time off for dependants to deal with an urgent problem you should refer to our 'Time off to care for dependants policy'.





#### 4. Types of carer's leave

Subject to meeting the definition of a carer there are 2 types of carer's leave;

##### 4.1 Unpaid carer's leave

You are entitled to take a maximum of five days unpaid carer's leave within a 12-month period (pro-rated for part time staff), this is a day 1 right and would also apply in addition to any paid period of carer's leave, if applicable. This leave can be taken as either a full day or a few hours. Your leave entitlement under this clause will run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

##### 4.2 Paid carer's leave

Once you have at least 26 weeks' continuous service, you are entitled to take a maximum of five days paid carer's leave within a 12-month period (pro-rated for part-time staff). This leave can be taken as either a full day or a few hours. Your leave entitlement under this clause will run from 1 April to 31 March each year.

#### 5. Notice requirements

- 1.1 You must give your line manager notice of at least twice the length of leave requested, plus one day, i.e. for 1 day off you will be required to give 3 days' notice of your intention to take carer's leave. We accept that it may not always be possible to provide this amount of notice, you are however required to provide as much notice as reasonably possible.

We reserve the right not to provide paid carer's leave in circumstances where you have failed to use your best efforts to comply with the notice requirements.

#### Time off for employees affected by miscarriage or stillbirth

- 1.1 We recognise that the effects of a miscarriage or stillbirth can be extremely distressing and that many employees will regard a miscarriage as the loss of a baby, regardless of how early in pregnancy it occurs.

We are committed to supporting employees who are affected by a miscarriage or stillbirth, and we encourage you to discuss your situation with us if you are comfortable doing so.

##### Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

- 'miscarriage' means the loss of a baby before the end of the 24th week of pregnancy
- 'stillbirth' means the loss of a baby after 24 complete weeks of pregnancy.

- 1.2 It is the organisation's commitment to grant up to five days paid leave in any one year for an employee who has had a miscarriage or stillbirth (this includes any parent). This is a day one right, therefore there is no minimum continuous service requirement to be eligible for this time off.

Time off for up to the permitted number of days will be paid at your normal rate of basic pay. Any further additional days

of allowance would be at the discretion of the relevant Director in consultation with the Director of Resources.

- 1.3 All employees, including those expecting a child through surrogacy, will qualify for time off under this policy from their first day of service.

We recognise that the loss of a baby is a distressing experience for both parents. Therefore, an employee whose partner has a miscarriage or stillbirth, or the father or parent of the baby who has passed away, may also need support or be eligible for time off.

- 1.4 An employee's entitlement to statutory maternity leave depends on whether they have had a miscarriage or a stillbirth. An employee who has a miscarriage is not entitled to maternity leave. An employee who has a stillbirth is entitled to maternity leave, which will commence the day after the stillbirth, and to Statutory Maternity Pay or Additional Maternity Pay if they meet the normal qualifying conditions. Please refer to the Maternity leave and pay policy.

This stillbirth offering of five days paid leave, is in addition of Maternity Leave and can be taken at any time following the Maternity Leave period.

- 1.5 Employees can also take up to two weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave after their statutory maternity leave, and (if eligible) receive Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay. Please refer to the Parental bereavement leave and pay policy if you suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

#### Compassionate leave

If you suffer a bereavement of an immediate family member or experience a significant life event, you may be granted up to five days paid compassionate leave per event in any 12-month period (pro-rated for part-time staff). This is at the discretion of your Director and each case will be viewed sympathetically and the amount of leave granted may be extended at the discretion of your Director depending on your individual circumstances. If an extension of compassionate leave is not granted and you wish to take further leave, you should request annual leave in the usual way.

You should inform your manager of the need to take compassionate leave as soon as reasonably practicable or, at the latest, on the first day on which you are absent. Immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild. Please see the Family friendly section for details on Parental bereavement leave and pay.

#### Gender reassignment leave

The Children's Trust will always be supportive of any employee who expresses an intention to undergo gender reassignment and will work with them to ensure as smooth a transition at work as possible.

## Definitions:

- Gender reassignment: to undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.
- Transgender or trans: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid or non-binary.

## Entitlement

Employees who are going through gender reassignment will be entitled to three additional paid days off, which can be used for medical appointments, therapy or other treatment. This is at the discretion of your Director and each case will be viewed sympathetically and the amount of leave granted may be extended at the discretion of your Director depending on your individual circumstances.

This entitlement supports The Children's Trust's commitment to promote equity and diversity, and to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that is representative of its stakeholders.

## Accommodating gender reassignment

Once an employee has decided they wish to undergo gender reassignment, a dedicated contact will be assigned to answer any queries the individual concerned may have. This could be the individual's line manager or a HR Business Partner.

Upon notification, the employee may be asked to provide expected timescales for any medical procedures, however we recognise that these may change. It is the individual's responsibility to keep their line manager updated during the course of their absence.

Following the individual's gender reassignment, consideration should be given to the following:

- when and if the employee expects to change their name and pronouns and to start presenting at work in their new gender. The employee will be required to provide evidence of their change in name in order for this to be updated in our records
- line managers should consult with the individual to agree how colleagues, and other stakeholders, will be notified where necessary
- line managers may wish to refer the individual to occupational health should they require advice on adjustments required, and
- line managers should regularly consult with the individual to ensure that they are not experiencing any bullying or harassment by colleagues. If they are, this should be dealt with in accordance to the Bullying and harassment policy.

## Medical and dental appointments

We understand that occasionally staff will have to attend hospital, medical, dentist and other similar appointments.

We also understand that in some cases staff will not have any control over appointment times.

We expect staff to make every effort to ensure that any routine appointments take place before or after the working day. Where this is not possible, staff will need to make sure appointments are arranged to minimise disruption to work i.e. at start or end of working day.

Staff will not be paid for this time away from work, but at the line manager's discretion, staff may be able to make the time up. Where this is not possible and a member of staff does not wish this time to be unpaid, a staff member could use any accrued annual leave and must request this in the usual way.

## Sabbaticals

The Children's Trust recognises the importance of employees' work-life balance and personal development, therefore we offer employees the opportunity to take sabbatical leave. This is at the discretion of your line manager, with written approval from your Director, and it has to be for a valid reason which aids your professional development and will benefit you in your current role such as:

- Studying
- Volunteering

This voluntary arrangement allows an employee to take a period of unpaid leave over and above their usual leave entitlement. Both full-time and part-time employees with over five years' continuous service are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.

Sabbatical leave is subject to a minimum of three months and a maximum period of 12 months. Sabbatical leave may, at the discretion of The Children's Trust, be granted more than once during the course of an employee's employment but only in exceptional circumstances and only where a period of at least five years has passed since the employee returned to work following their previous period of sabbatical leave.

All requests for sabbatical leave should be made in writing to your line manager, stating the preferred start date, duration, and the proposed objectives of the sabbatical. Requests should be made at least eight weeks prior to your proposed start date, if your notice period is more than eight weeks you should make the request in line with your notice period. In your request, you should also state how our organisation might be affected by your proposed absence on sabbatical leave and how any potential problems might be overcome.

The Children's Trust will consider any request for a sabbatical, but the decision whether or not to grant the sabbatical will be entirely at our discretion. There is no right to appeal against the decision.

During a sabbatical, you will not be paid any wages or pension contributions; however, your period of service will be regarded as continuous for all statutory purposes.

During the period of sabbatical you will only accrue statutory annual leave (28 days per annum inclusive of Bank Holidays) and not enhanced contracted annual leave. Any annual leave



accrued during a Sabbatical must be booked in the normal way and taken during the sabbatical and cannot be attached to the start or end of any approved Sabbatical leave period. If you have any accrued but untaken annual leave accrued prior to a period of sabbatical starting, you may be asked to take it before the sabbatical begins.

An employee who wishes to take up any other paid employment during the period of sabbatical leave, or provide any consultancy services to other organisations on a self-employed basis, must obtain agreement from The Children's Trust.

### **Contact during sabbaticals**

In advance of your sabbatical leave, your line manager should arrange to keep in contact with you during the leave. Typically, contact will be at least once a month, although this is a matter for agreement between you and your line manager.

Your line manager will also contact you to inform you of any important workplace developments, such as a reorganisation, job opportunities and upcoming training events. Similarly, it is up to you to inform your line manager of any changes in personal circumstances of which our organisation should be made aware, such as a change of address.

### **Return to work following sabbatical**

On completion of sabbatical leave, you will return to the same job as before or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to a job of equivalent seniority and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those that would have applied had the sabbatical not been taken.

You will also be expected to take part in a re-induction process to familiarise yourself with any processes that may have changed and complete any expired training. Your line manager may also require you take part in any refresher training courses where relevant for your role.

### **Unpaid leave**

If you wish to take less than three months leave, in addition to any holiday allowance, you can speak to your line manager about utilising other options.

### **Menopause time-out days**

It is the organisation's commitment to grant up to 10 fully paid 'time-out' days (pro-rated for part time staff) throughout their employment for anyone needing respite as a result of symptoms of menopause, not to be taken as consecutive days. A maximum of three days can be used at any one year period (April – March). These days are offered to staff going through the different types of menopause and include the following:

- Natural menopause
- Premature or early menopause
- Late menopause
- Surgical or induced menopause - both temporary and permanent.

We are committed to creating an open and supportive



culture. We want you to feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting you at work and able to ask for the support that you need to help you manage your symptoms. Please see the Wellbeing section for more information on menopause.

### Jury service and giving evidence

In the event that you are summoned for jury service or called to give evidence as a witness, you will need to notify your line manager and the payroll team at the earliest opportunity to arrange leave.

You should provide your line manager and the payroll team with a copy of the court summons and/or any other relevant documentation. You will be required to give details of the date jury service or the requirement to give evidence is due to start and an end date, if known.

Where the organisation considers that an employee's absence on jury service could cause substantial injury to the business, the employee will be asked to make an application for excusal or deferral, as appropriate. Where this applies, the employee should not submit an application for excusal or deferral before the organisation has provided them with a letter (and any other relevant evidence) to support the application.

If the employee's jury service or attendance to other formal proceedings ends before the expected period (or such longer period as the court may have indicated to the employee that they will be required for) the employee will be expected to return to work for the remainder of that period.

You will be able to claim a loss of earnings allowance from the court for the period of your jury service. This will be subject to a maximum amount set by HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

We will top up the loss of earnings allowance so that you receive your normal rate of pay during the first 10 working days on which you are absent on jury service. In other words, your pay will be adjusted so that you receive the difference between the amount of the loss of earnings allowance that you are entitled to claim and your usual pay.

For the remaining period of your jury service, we will not make any further top-up payments, but you will continue to be able to claim a loss of earnings allowance from the court.

To claim the allowance, you will need to complete the loss of earnings claim form that you receive with your jury summons letter. The form should be given to your line manager and payroll immediately so that they can complete the employer's section and return it to you. You will need to take the completed form to court on your first day of jury service.

We will continue to pay you as normal during the first 10 working days on which you are absent on jury service until your loss of earnings claim has been processed by the court. This is provided that you:

- submit your loss of earnings claim form to the court, and
- undertake to repay The Children's Trust the loss of earnings allowance that you receive from the court, by consenting to the relevant net amount being deducted from your next salary.

You must notify your line manager and payroll immediately that your loss of earnings claim has been processed and provide evidence of the amount you have received from the court. We will then make the appropriate deduction, in full, from your next pay.

### Loss of earnings: Non-jury service

For any other attendance to formal proceedings for the purpose of giving evidence, other than Jury Service, where loss of earning cannot be claimed, we will continue to pay your normal basic pay up to a maximum of five working days at the discretion of your Director.

# Children we support

## Community Rehabilitation Services: Shakeerah's story

Shakeerah was diagnosed with a brain tumour just after her first birthday. She underwent countless surgeries and spent two years in hospital. Her brain injury resulted in her being unable to walk independently, she also has a tracheostomy and is profoundly deaf.

Now aged 10, Shakeerah has come through lots of health challenges and is attending a mainstream fully-BSL (British Sign Language) school. She has lots of friends and is thriving academically.

However, her mum Yasmeen identifies some of her ongoing challenges: "Shakeerah is at an age where she's being invited to parties at climbing centres and trampoline parks. She can't participate and run off and play with her friends and it's really sad to see. Her friends come back to cut the cake and Shakeerah is there, but she hasn't participated in any of the activities."

Communication is also a challenge. Shakeerah was using a walking frame to be able to move independently, which is a barrier for her as it means she can't use her hands to communicate through sign language at the same time as

standing and walking. She has also been accepted for support from a hearing dog, but she has to be able to walk the dog herself before she can receive one.

### Personalised therapy programme

Shakeerah's goal is to be able to walk so that she can join in with her peers with the support of a hearing dog. She was supported by the Community Rehabilitation Team at The Children's Trust, receiving 22 physiotherapy sessions over the course of six weeks.

Her physiotherapist, Savannah, initially concentrated on building her strength and balance, which is vital for mobility. In the first week, she went from doing four steps supported by handrails, to walking the whole length of the gymnasium independently.

Shakeerah's Mum Yasmeen says: "I have seen lots of progress. Her balance is better – she is still leaning as she has a weakness in her left side, but she's improving every day and growing in confidence."



*"After two weeks of physiotherapy sessions over the Easter holidays, Shakeerah went back to school and walked to the front of her school assembly to huge applause from all the students."*  
- Yas, Shakeerah's Mum



# Responsible organisation

## Contents

- Sustainability
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Wellbeing

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## Sustainability

The Children's Trust is committed to being a responsible organisation. We aim high when setting standards for this and take our responsibility very seriously when assessing our impact on the world and communities in which we exist, on the environment and on the people who work for and with us.

This work sees us focusing on the following areas:

- equity, diversity and inclusion
- wellbeing
- sustainability
- achieving net carbon zero
- engaging our local communities
- delivering our work in line with best ethical practice.

This document has further information about our work on equity, diversity and inclusion, and employee wellbeing. Please do find further information about the Responsible Organisation Strategy on The Loop.

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## Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Children's Trust is committed to providing an inclusive environment where employees can be open and treat each other, beneficiaries and stakeholders with respect, sensitivity, and compassion. Our purpose is driven by our beneficiaries, many of whom live with significant disabilities, and some who call The Children's Trust their home. We believe their home, and our workplace, should be a place where we celebrate and accept differences, and everyone can be their best and most authentic self. This creates an environment where people want to work and feel represented.





At The Children's Trust we recognise how important it is to engage staff at all levels with equity, diversity and inclusion, as well as listening to their lived experiences.

For this reason, we have an equity, diversity and inclusion working group called 'SPARK' which contributes to this agenda.

The Children's Trust will not tolerate any discriminatory behaviour. We foster a culture where people can speak up and raise their concerns, and any allegations will be taken seriously and handled confidentially and sympathetically. We encourage staff members who have experienced discrimination to raise this with their manager in the first instance.

You can read more about this work in our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy, which can be found on The Loop.

## Wellbeing

We care deeply about the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers at The Children's Trust. We offer resources, information, and support services to promote wellbeing in the workplace. We set out our vision in the Wellbeing Strategy which can be found on The Loop.

### The Children's Trust wellbeing vision

Every person at The Children's Trust matters. Our vision is that everyone is able to give their best and be their best. To achieve this vision, the Wellbeing Strategy focuses on personal, team and organisation wellbeing.

Our wellbeing ambition is that every person will feel:

- they can find and access support when they need it
- they are equipped to adapt to and overcome challenges
- the organisation has put a range of strategies, initiatives, and resources in place to allow them to take care of their wellbeing
- they are encouraged, respected, and supported.

The strategy further sets out four key building blocks: financial, emotional, physical and social wellbeing. Each of these key areas include resources and initiatives to enable our staff to

feel supported at work and able to put the children, young people and their families first, and deliver an outstanding service.

### Hybrid working

As the UK's leading charity for children and young people with brain injury, we deliver rehabilitation, education and community services, with the majority of our work based at our national specialist centre in Tadworth, Surrey. We look after children and young people 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The focus of all our staff, no matter their individual role, is the common purpose of giving children in our care the best life possible. There is therefore an expectation that all roles will include regular periods onsite, in order to maintain the connection to our common purpose.

For those roles where hybrid working is applicable (i.e. remote working from an alternative location), the focus is on striking a balance between home / alternative location working and onsite operational requirements.

Hybrid working is a discretionary arrangement and not intended to change anyone's contractual place of work. It is based on a minimum of 60% of an individual's working hours being office based and 40% working remotely, unless formally requested and approved via a flexible working request.

## A. Financial wellbeing

The financial wellbeing resources aim to increase staff awareness of the benefits available to them and provide further support and information.

### Blue Light Card

A Blue Light Card provides those in the NHS, emergency services, social care sector and armed forces with discounts online and in store.

Register for your Blue Light Card and receive discounts to hundreds of retailers. Please visit The Loop to find out how to register.

### Co-operative nursery

The Children's Trust recognises that in order to do a great job, our staff need to be confident that their own children are being looked

after safely. To help with this, we have our very own nursery, run by Co-operative Childcare, which we subsidise for staff. Please contact a member of the People team for further information.

### The benefits hub

The benefits hub can be accessed via the Spectrum life platform and app and provides a wide range of shopping offers and discounts. For full details of the benefits Spectrum Life offers, and information on how to register, please visit [The Loop](#).

### Pensions

Staff will be automatically enrolled into The Children's Trust pension scheme with Aviva in their second full month of employment, if the criteria for auto enrolment has been met.

This occurs when:

- staff are aged over 22
- are under state pension age
- earn more than £10,000 a year
- ordinarily work in the UK.

Eligible staff also have access to the NHS and teacher pension scheme.

For further information, including how to opt out of the pension scheme, setting your own contributions and continuing in your current pension scheme, visit the pension pages on The Loop, which contain a useful FAQ document.

You can also contact our pension advisors, Lucas Fettes, for free guidance on your pension on [0345 357 8910](tel:0345 357 8910) or via email [contactus@lffp.co.uk](mailto:contactus@lffp.co.uk)

### Life assurance

If you are a permanent employee of The Children's Trust, you will be automatically enrolled under the group life assurance scheme.

**Group life assurance cover can provide a lump sum benefit (2x your annual basic salary)** to your family, dependants, or other nominated beneficiaries, in the unfortunate event of your death while you are an employee of The Children's Trust and a member of the scheme.

For more information on this, including how to nominate your beneficiaries, please contact the member of the HRBP team or visit The Loop.

### Health cash plans

Health cash plans are a simple way for employees and their families to save money on health care costs. With Health cash plans, employees pay a premium each month and claim the cash back when needed. Different levels of cover are provided, depending on what is affordable for you.

There are two plans available which offer a discounted rate to employees compared to those available to the general public. Employees can choose between HSF or Simply Health. Application forms, along with more information on both schemes, can be found on [The Loop](#).

## B. Emotional wellbeing

At The Children's Trust, we aim to create a proactive, caring and supportive working environment, which allows staff to be open in addressing emotional wellbeing and mental health in the work place.

Please see The Loop for full details of the support, resources, and initiatives we have in place to support staff mental health.

### Employee Assistance Programme

Having someone to turn to when you need support can make all the difference to your wellbeing. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to do just that. **The on-demand service gives you free day-to-day wellbeing support and access to an expert counselling service to help you and your immediate family at any time – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**

There's almost no end to the issues you can get support with, which includes but isn't limited to:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Financial worries
- Substance abuse issues
- Worries about physical health
- Confidence issue

The Employee Assistance Programme is there when you need, in a way that works best for you. You'll be able to contact the EAP in a way you prefer, by phone, WhatsApp, live chat, SMS or by requesting a call back. Whether you're looking for support with your health, finances, personal or work life, a qualified counsellor will be on hand when you need it.

Access experts for in-the-moment support, core services include:

- Confidential helpline
- Structured counselling
- Legal and finance support
- Medical helpline
- Day to day information services

Visit the Benefits and Wellbeing section on the Loop for detail on how to register on the platform and app.

### Support resources

There is a selection of support resources available to staff to help support their emotional wellbeing and mental health; these can all be found on The Loop through the Wellbeing pages. Here staff also have access to a sources of support document, which holds a number of internal and external services that can offer support across a range of wellbeing areas.

We have created educational resources for managers and staff, in order to support all staff who are managing different health related challenges, such as:

- managing employees with long-term sickness or life-threatening conditions
- menopause: see also the Leave section and the full menopause at work practical guide, which can be found on The Loop.

We also have an Occupational Health (OH) resource to address any queries you may have on the effects menopause symptoms may have on your work.

Other resources available include:

- **Spectrum Life:** Provides access to wellbeing webinars, calm programmes and a sound space podcast to support your emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- **Training:** Managers have access to training around supporting their team's mental health. Staff have access to training around stress awareness and resilience. For more information, contact a member of the HRBP team.
- **Sources of support directory:** This is available to staff on The Loop, and offers signposting to internal and external support resources.

## C. Physical wellbeing

At The Children's Trust we aim to increase the physical activity level among staff by providing the opportunity to be active in the workplace and make further information available on the benefits of physical activity.

### Occupational Health Service

#### All staff have access to The Children's Trust

Occupational Health Service. Our occupational health service is co-ordinated internally, however the service is provided by Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust.

This service will focus on taking appropriate preventive measures, managing chronic conditions, helping employees recover from an acute illness or unexpected injury and successfully return to peak functionality at home and at work.

Occupational Health will assist and provide guidance on any current diagnosis and the impact this may have on your employment and ability to carry out your role. However, the occupational health nurses cannot diagnose you, and are not a replacement of your general practitioner.

The below services are also managed by Occupational Health and provided by different external providers:

- **Free eye tests:** Staff that spend the majority of their working day at a computer (a VDU user) may be entitled to an eye test voucher at Specsavers opticians
- **Free staff health checks:** Six monthly health checks are available for staff, in partnership with YMCA East Surrey (Only for staff aged 40-74)
- **Self-referral:** Occupational Health also has a self-referral service for staff, providing a confidential discussion with the Occupational Health nurse about any health-related workplace concerns.

For full details of the services Occupational Health offers and to find out how to book an appointment, visit The Loop or contact Occupational Health on Ext. 5053 or email:

[occupationalhealth@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:occupationalhealth@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

### Spectrum Life

The digital gym, fitness and nutrition sections in the Spectrum Life platform and app include information on keeping physically healthy by providing exercises and tips to keep you active and a huge selection of recipes, along with access to a range of online gym classes.

### Information on the benefits of physical activity

The Loop provides employees with information on the benefits of physical activity. Visit the Occupational Health and Wellbeing page on The Loop to find out more.

## D. Social wellbeing

The Children's Trust aims to promote a more collaborative and engaged workforce by increasing the opportunities for social activities across site. Social wellbeing initiatives are regularly updated depending on a number of factors e.g. special events, time of year, health and safety restrictions etc. However, some of the set initiatives are as follows.

### Recognition

Staff receive recognition values cards from others across the organisation when they have gone above and beyond, or to celebrate success. Paper recognition cards can be sent to celebrate achievements, or alternatively can be sent digitally, Viva insights on Microsoft teams.

### Long service milestones

We are committed to celebrating work anniversary milestones of five, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years to reward long service to thank staff for their loyalty, commitment, hard work and efforts. To celebrate and recognise long service Directors will present butterfly badges and certificates within their directorate monthly.

### Health and wellbeing initiatives

Each month, we mark health and wellbeing initiatives with blogs and by sharing information on the event. Teams are encouraged to discuss the new information and use it to support their wellbeing at work.

## E. Staff volunteering

All staff are encouraged to volunteer for The Children's Trust if they wish to do so. If the opportunity to volunteer is during your normal working hours/shift pattern, authorisation must be sought from your line manager at their discretion.

Opportunities will be posted on The Loop and in Staying Connected, our internal newsletter. Any questions, please contact the Volunteering team [volunteering@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)





# Learning and development

The Children's Trust is committed to the ongoing training and development of its staff in line with the organisation's overall vision and strategy.

The organisation will ensure that all employees have the knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil individual and organisational needs and ambitions.

We seize every opportunity to improve what we do and promote a learning culture that drives engagement in continuous professional development.

Please refer to Training and Development policy and procedures for further information.

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## Mandatory training

All employees are expected to undertake and update all elements of mandatory training according to their role. You will be asked to complete your mandatory training within your first week of joining The Children's Trust.

There are 10 mandatory trainings for clinical staff and seven for support staff as listed below:

Training	Who	Frequency
Fire Safety	All staff	Annually
Food Hygiene	Clinical staff	Annually
Health & Safety	All staff	Bi-annual
Information Governance	All staff	Annually
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	All staff	Annually
Manual Handling	Clinical staff	Annually
Resus	Clinical staff	Annually
Safeguarding	All staff	Annually
Prevent	All staff	Every 3 years
KCSIE	All staff	Annually

All training can be accessed via The Loop with the exception of Manual handling, Resus and Safeguarding, which are available to book on Access (Select HR - Learning and development - Self service). Additionally, Prevent is accessed by the Home Office eLearning platform.

On completion of mandatory training, your training record will be updated and available for you to view in Access (Select HR - Learning and development - Self service). Your training history section will display events you have attended or have booked onto in the future, and any online training you have completed.

We encourage our staff to take ownership of their learning and development. **You are responsible for monitoring your compliance and booking any training due to expire via Access Self Service.**

There is additional information and guidance on [monitoring and booking your training on The Loop](#).

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## Internal training

A comprehensive annual programme of training activities, designed and delivered on-site and virtually, can be viewed and booked via Access (Select HR - Learning and development - Self service - Future training courses) by employees, line managers and training representatives. Once you have booked a training event on the system, a notification will be sent to your line manager for approval. You will receive an automated system notification prior to the training date to confirm that the training has been booked.

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## External training

The organisation recognises the importance of providing a wide range of training and development opportunities to staff including the opportunity to attend external training.

Decisions on the suitability and applicability of programmes will be determined through the performance review process, during which individual training and development needs are identified within a personal development plan.

Once an appropriate course of training or study has been identified, you will need to complete the external training request form found on The Loop. This will need to be submitted to your line manager for training needs approval and sent to the L&D team on [training@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:training@thechildrenstrust.org.uk) together with the course details and the course provider booking form. The L&D team will book any external training following training budget approval.

Line managers have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning for employees who have undergone external training and development.

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## Study leave

The organisation is fully committed to staff development, recognising that affording employees the opportunity to undertake study will benefit both the employee and the organisation.

Please see the Training and Development Policy for further information on Study leave.

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## Library

A library is available for all staff and is located along the doctor's corridor on Maple House. If required you can request access via reception for Archie Norman House.

Set up from a donation from Mr Robert Ball, Chairman of The Children's Trust from 1993-1998, the library was officially opened in December 1999 by Mr Ball's wife.

The library holds a collection of approximately 1,000 books, covering many subjects including occupational therapy, nursing, research skills, organisational management and resources to support RQF qualifications.

The original ethos to develop a dynamic collection of resources to aid the work and continuing education of our staff is upheld today and we strive to constantly review our resources and services to provide the best possible support to the work of The Children's Trust.



# Child first

## DBS and security

The Children's Trust aims to provide the highest possible safeguarding assurances to the children and young people we support while ensuring that the organisation meets all legal and regulatory requirements (i.e. employment, safeguarding and privacy).

### 1. DBS and security

It is a condition of employment at The Children's Trust to have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, registered on the DBS Online Update Service (where applicable), owing to the vulnerability of the children and young people in our care.

**No DBS check will be considered to be complete until the applicant has provided the paper DBS certificate for verification.**

- 1.1 For permanent and bank staff The Children's Trust does not accept DBS checks from other organisations (unless they are registered on the DBS Online Update Service and are the correct level and barred lists for the role).
- 1.2 DBS checks confirm whether the employee has any convictions or adult cautions that have not been filtered and whether they have been barred from working with vulnerable children and or adults. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. where the business need is deemed to be critical and the role is non-child facing, then by agreement of the manager and the Director of Resources, a staff member may be able to commence in post, preferably remotely, prior to the issue of the DBS certificate. In this instance all other compliance checks must be complete and the DBS check must be processing. A Risk Assessment must be carried out covering access entitlements on site, how the person will be supervised, and by whom, to ensure that the children and vulnerable adults in our care are safeguarded. The Risk Assessment must be reviewed regularly to ensure that the mitigations put in place to safeguard the children and young people, are being adhered to.
- 1.3. All staff are required to bring in their paper DBS certificate and the DBS process is not complete until the paper certificate has been seen.



- 1.4 It is the responsibility of the individual to maintain a valid DBS (on the update service where applicable). Failure to do so could result in the individual being suspended (without pay) and initiate the disciplinary process.

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## 2. DBS re-checks

- 2.1 The organisation carries out DBS checks at the start of employment and then on a three-yearly basis thereafter. It is mandatory for all eligible staff to subscribe to the DBS Online Update Service, which then removes the need to carry out three-yearly DBS checks and allows the organisation to check their DBS status annually.
- 2.2 The cost of joining the Update Service is £13. This will be reimbursed via payroll once the consent form and original paper DBS certificate have been verified by the People team. and will appear as a separate item on the pay slip. Individuals registered with the online update service will need to resubscribe on an annual basis on receipt of the reminder email from the DBS. The Update Service will be checked annually and the £13 renewal fee will be reimbursed once the subscription has been confirmed by the People team.

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## 3. DBS checks and absence

Staff members on maternity leave, where they are able to do so, should renew their DBS check and join the DBS Online Update Service within the specified timeframes. Where this is not possible due to serious illness, this should be discussed with their line manager and a new DBS check must be in place before they return to work. Should the Update Service subscription lapse and there are no extenuating circumstances, the staff member will be responsible for the cost of a new DBS check. It is the staff member's responsibility to respond to any emails from the DBS Update Service advising them that their subscription is going to lapse. We are not privy to any communication received directly from the DBS so are unable to advise of an upcoming expiry.

In addition, should the staff member fail to join the DBS Update Service when asked, and within the 30 day window, they will also be responsible for the cost of another DBS check in a year's time so that they can join the DBS Update Service at that point.

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## 4. Reporting changes

- 4.1. All existing employees are required to report any police allegations, convictions or adult cautions that occur

during the course of their employment, whether at home or abroad, to the People team within five working days of the event, or as soon as reasonably practicable. Failure to do so will be treated as a disciplinary offence and may result in dismissal. The employee/worker will be required to complete a Criminal Record Self-Disclosure Form; the People team will identify any further action required.

- 4.2. If the allegations result in a police record, a new DBS check will be undertaken. A Positive Disclosure Risk Assessment will be repeated by the People team. This will identify if any further action is required, which could result in disciplinary action or redeployment to another position within the organisation.

### Relevant policies:

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks policy
- Recruitment of Applicants with a Criminal Record Policy and SOP.
- Safer Recruitment Policy

All enquiries must be sent to [DBS@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:DBS@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

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## 5. Lanyard guidelines and site access

- 5.1. All those coming on site at The Children's Trust must display a lanyard of the correct colour at all times. The different lanyards are shown below, and it is each employee's responsibility to challenge or report people who are not displaying a lanyard and ID pass. For further information please refer to the lanyard guidelines on The Loop.

### Lanyard colours:

- red lanyard: parents and siblings of children (over 11)
- orange lanyard: children and young people in residence
- yellow lanyard: volunteers
- blue lanyards: permanent and bank staff
- green lanyard: temporary and visiting staff who do not require supervision (as they have undergone full compliance checks)
- purple lanyard: staff/visitors/guests who require supervision.

- 5.2. The site is divided into two zones, which are defined as follows:
- zone one: a place where regulated activity takes place e.g. houses, School, New Cheyne Centre, hydrotherapy pool, Cedar Centre (when occupied by children or vulnerable adults)
  - zone two: all areas outside Zone one, doctor's corridor, corridor leading directly from the main entrance of the New Cheyne Centre to the management corridor and management corridor in New Cheyne Centre.

- 5.3. Levels of supervision in these zones are dictated by the colour of lanyard that the individual is wearing. For instance, in zone one, individuals wearing purple lanyards should be closely supervised.

For further guidance, refer to the lanyard guidelines and the site zoning plan on The Loop. In addition, for information about Temporary and Visiting Workers and their management please refer to the Temporary and Visiting Workers policy, also on The Loop.





# Managing personal information and finance

Employees should take ownership of their personal information and should ensure it is updated regularly so that we have the correct details on file. They can do this by using the Self-Service portal via Workspace Access.

You will need to check we hold the correct personal information, and update the system when there is a change of:

- personal mobile phone number
- personal email address
- home address
- emergency contact information
- bank account details
- marital status.

You will need to notify the People team if you have recently changed your name – this could be as a result of marriage, divorce or a change of name by deed poll. You will need to provide the People team with evidence of this and request that your name is changed in the system. Once your name has been changed, the people team will notify IT and Reception. You will then be responsible for visiting reception and obtaining a new ID card showing the correct name.



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## Equity, diversity and inclusion

In March 2020 we launched our initiative to collect EDI data as part of the wider work currently being undertaken to make The Children's Trust more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

The three main reasons we need this data are:

- to better understand and support colleagues in the workplace
- to determine whether our staff body is representative of the young people, families and wider communities we support
- to understand how accessible and fair our recruitment processes and pay are.

Having access to this data will help us to make positive changes, but we cannot do it without your help. You can fill in your information by logging into Access (Self Service - Select HR - My Details - Equality). There is also a 'prefer not to say' option.

- once the line manager/Director has approved the form, this must be sent to the HR Business Partnering team who will authorise The Children's Trust to deduct the sum of money from the employee's salary
- employees are only able to submit one salary advance request per 12 months.

If you have any questions regarding salary advances, please contact the HR Business Partnering team or the Payroll team.

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## Finance

All your payslips and P60s are available for you to view in Access (Workspace - Self service). Payslips and P60s are password protected. Your password is your national insurance number in upper case letters.

If you have any questions regarding payslips, or relating your pay, please contact the Payroll team on [payroll@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:payroll@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

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## Salary advances

You are able to request a salary advance, a portion of your salary in advance of your next normal payday, only in exceptional circumstances to overcome an unexpected or unavoidable occurrence.

### **Requests must follow the below terms:**

- only permanent staff who have successfully completed their probation can submit a salary advance request
- salary advances must be requested on the official form, obtained from payroll, and must be signed by the employee before being authorised by their line manager. In the absence of their line manager, the form should be signed by the Director
- the form should include the amount that will be advanced against your salary, this must not be more than 20% of the employee's monthly salary
- the form should also indicate the repayment plan, employees can agree to repay in monthly instalments over a maximum of three months. If no repayment plan is stipulated, the advances will be deducted in full from the first monthly payment following the advance.



# Giving references

**All professional references for a former or current employee may be given only by the HR Business Partnering team.**

The Children's Trust will not give verbal references, any references provided must be in writing on the organisation's headed paper, marked 'private and confidential'. No other person in the organisation is permitted to provide a written or verbal professional reference about current or former employees on behalf of the organisation, as they will incur certain liabilities on behalf of The Children's Trust.

Professional references include employment reference, financial reference, and confirmation of employment in support of visa requests. All requests for a professional reference should be sent to [references@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:references@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

We aim to fulfil requests within seven working days.

## Obtaining consent

The individual dealing with the reference request should ensure that the individual to whom the request for the reference relates has given their written consent for a reference to be provided. Consent via email is acceptable where it is not possible to obtain written and signed consent. If the person dealing with the request has any doubts about whether or not the individual has given their consent, they must contact the individual to check whether or not they want a reference to be provided.

## Employment references

The reference should explain that it is the organisation's procedure to respond to requests for information in a standard format, and that the recipient should not draw any negative inferences from the fact the reference is limited in this way.

Only factual information may be provided, such as employment dates and roles held. The Children's Trust also reserves the right to outline whether there are any concerns about the suitability of the individual to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

**Any allegations related to Safeguarding and referred to the LADO may have to appear in references for a period of 10 years.**

These disclosures must be approved by the Head of Nursing and Care. Non safeguarding disclosures may include where probation has been extended, confirmation of disciplinary investigations which resulted in dismissal, or where an employee may have left the organisation whilst being investigated under the Disciplinary policy. (Where such disclosure is made, this must be approved by a HR Business Partner before issuing).

The author of the reference should not include any information regarding absence or sickness history, unless with the approval of the Head of People and Culture or the Director of Resources. Where such information is provided, the author of the reference must ensure that they only include the number of days/hours the individual was absent but must not divulge any information about the individual's health. For best practice, the author of the reference must obtain the individual's explicit consent before sharing this information, it is not enough to rely on the individual's general consent when providing absence/sickness data.

The individual providing the reference must not provide personal opinions about the individual's performance or conduct. It is the responsibility of the author of the reference to ensure that the information provided is true, accurate, fair and not misleading.

Employers will sometimes send a copy of a job description for the new post and ask you to comment on the member of staff's suitability to carry out the duties of the new role competently.

The best approach in this regard is to adhere by the company procedure and only provide basic factual information on the reference, not including information regarding the suitability of the role.

A disclaimer should be included in the reference making it clear that, while the information provided is, to the best of the organisation's knowledge, completely accurate, the organisation cannot accept any liability for decisions based on it.

The Children's Trust reserves the right to include any other relevant information, such as if an individual left during a financial dispute. This will be included in the reference if at the time of the reference request, the dispute is not resolved.

Once the reference is complete, it must be returned confidentially to the original requester. The email must be marked as confidential.

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## Dealing with enquiries raised by the prospective employer

If the author of the reference receives an enquiry from the prospective employer for clarification of information given in the reference, the author must ensure that they do not go beyond the content of the reference in the information provided. Any such enquiry should, where possible, be dealt with in writing to avoid any subsequent confusion. If the enquiry is dealt with over the telephone, a written record of the information provided must be made at the time of the conversation.

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## Character references

All professional references must be issued by the People team, however, members of staff within the organisation are able to give personal references for other individuals provided no mention whatsoever is made of The Children's Trust and it is sent on private blank notepaper (it must not be sent from any email address from The Children's Trust either). Ensure that the following statement is included in any written personal reference you provide concerning your reference on your colleague/ex-colleague:

'Note this is a personal reference and is not in any way given on behalf of The Children's Trust'.

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## Financial references

Where a request for financial information is made, the above rules regarding consent are also relevant. The author of the reference should ensure that The Children's Trust templates are strictly followed and must not provide any further information than what is in the template.

Where an individual requests a confirmation of employment letter to support a visa application, the author of the reference should make all reasonable efforts to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the specific visa. However, it is important that all information included is factual and accurate.

The templates available outline all the information that can be provided, and this must be strictly followed. This may change depending on the type of visa is required, therefore please familiarise yourself with the requirements through the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

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## Retaining a copy of the reference

The People team should retain a copy of the reference in the individual's electronic record. Thereafter, the reference should be disposed of securely in line with the Record keeping and document retention policy.





# Leaver process

Should you sadly decide to leave us, please follow the leaver guidance outlined in this section. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that an effective and consistent approach is adopted by both employees leaving and their line managers.

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## Notice periods

You may terminate your contract of employment at any time by giving appropriate notice of your intended resignation. The length of your notice period is determined by the position held and will be specified in your contract of employment. This notice must be in writing and addressed to your line manager. In the absence of your line manager, please provide notice of your resignation to your Director or the interim manager at the time.

Where you decide to initially provide verbal notification that you are leaving, this must also be formally followed up in writing in order to satisfy the requirements for resignation as contained in contracts of employment. Your line manager should issue a written acknowledgement of your resignation date, so as to avoid any misunderstandings in relation to the commencement of the notice period.

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## Annual leave

You are encouraged to use any accrued annual leave throughout the leave year, however in circumstances where you have remaining unused annual leave, calculated by the HRBP team, you will be entitled to be paid in lieu of any untaken accrued annual leave up to your leaving date. This is with the exception of those on a fixed-term contract, who must use all accrued leave before the end of their fixed-term period as there will be no payment in lieu of any unused annual leave.

Subject to an agreement with your line manager, you may also use any untaken accrued annual leave during your notice period. Should annual leave already taken exceed your entitlement, the charity shall require you to repay an amount equivalent to your

salary for the number of hours by which you have exceeded your entitlement. The organisation reserves the right to deduct this sum from your final salary payment.

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## Property/equipment

You are required to return to the relevant department any property, including but not limited to, lanyard, any company keys, mobile phone, computers or other IT equipment, uniforms, library books and any protective clothing/equipment issued by The Children's Trust no later than your last working day by arrangement with your line manager.

Failure to return items may result in The Children's Trust deducting an equivalent sum from the employee's final salary, equal to the value of replacing the item.

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## Overpayment recovery

Where you are repaying an overpayment in instalments, or have any outstanding overpayment amount, this will be deducted from your final salary. Should the final salary be insufficient to cover the outstanding amount, you will be required to repay this to The Children's Trust's bank account. The People team will issue you with a letter outlining the net overpayment details and instructions on repaying this amount.

Where financial assistance has been sought for professional development activity e.g. Children's Support Assistant RQF fees, you will need to repay a percentage of the costs in the event that you leave within a specific term from the date of completing the training. Details of this will be contained in the Learner Agreement. Any sum owed will be included in a letter provided by the relevant department, and the amount will be deducted from your final salary. As above, should the final salary be insufficient to cover the outstanding balance, you will be required to repay this to The Children's Trust's bank account.

Any overpaid sum must be repaid within two months of leaving The Children's Trust. If this sum is not paid, this may be disclosed in any future references provided. For more information on references, please refer to the Giving References section of the Staff handbook.

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## Exit questionnaire

Once you have provided your line manager with notice of intention to resign and they process this via Access, you will be sent an acknowledgment letter with a link included asking you to complete an exit questionnaire. The purpose of this exit questionnaire is to gain an understanding of the reasons you are leaving and identify any working practices that need improving. This questionnaire is completed on an online form and automatically sent to the HR Business Partnering team. You may also complete this during a face-to-face interview with your line manager or HR Business Partner.

The data that is collected will be treated sensitively and will remain confidential, unless information provided requires follow-up action that may result in part of the information being shared. In this instance, only relevant information will be shared on a need-to-know basis.

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## Manager's responsibility

Managers are required to organise themselves with this guidance and follow the below steps:

- managers should discuss the resignation and the reasons for it with the employee and encourage the employee to complete the exit questionnaire. If the line manager has any concerns regarding the reason for the resignation, they should discuss it with their designated HR Business Partner
- managers should submit a leaver form within two working days of receiving the employee's notice to ensure that a resignation acknowledgement letter is issued to the leaver
- managers must ensure that employees due to leave The Children's Trust return their lanyard together with any other company equipment/property they may have been issued with, by no later than their last working day.



# Staff accommodation

The Children's Trust is able to offer on-site accommodation to staff and professional visitors on a variable duration.

- **Long-term stays** (one month or more), managed by the People team.
- **Short-term stays** (one night – up to five) consecutive nights, and on an ad-hoc basis), managed by the Housekeeping Lead Facilities team.

Maximum period of stay is 12 months and priority is given to new starters in need of accommodation.

If accommodation is no longer required prior to the termination date stated in the license to occupy, the required notice must be given and you are liable to pay rent aligned to the notice period.

Please note accommodation is allocated according to availability and priority will be given to roles regarded as difficult to recruit to e.g., nurses. Where accommodation is oversubscribed, accommodation requests will be organised by the HRBP team and their decision is not subject to appeal.

For the avoidance of doubt, where the staff accommodation on site is full, The Children's Trust is not responsible for finding or organisation staff accommodation elsewhere.

Guests of employees can stay on a short-term basis of no more than seven nights in any one month with the agreement of the Facilities team but are required to sign in and out of the accommodation on each occasion it is used. Guests are subject to all the organisation's policies and procedures when on site and their supervision is the sole responsibility of the member of staff hosting the guest. Room allocation is solely at the discretion of the Facilities team.

If you wish to apply for accommodation either as a tenant or for a short stay, please contact the HR Business Partner in the People team for long-term stays and the Housekeeping Lead in the Facilities team for short-term stays. On receipt of your application they will discuss your requirements, advise you of the options available and provide a written contract (known as 'License to Occupy' agreement) signed by both parties before you move into the accommodation.

Deductions for the rent for stays longer than one month will be made from monthly salary payments and include pro-rated deductions for part-month occupancy unless alternative payment arrangements are agreed with the Facilities team. For ad hoc stays, payment must be made in advance via the Facilities team before keys are issued.

Rents will be reviewed on an annual basis taking into account market rates.

Rent costs include:

- all utilities (i.e. water, gas, electricity)
- clean and reasonably decorated accommodation, on a part-furnished basis (including a single bed, cupboard storage, wardrobe, desk, chair, and wash basin), communal areas (including a lounge area with sofas and TV, kitchen cupboards, fridge and freezer space)
- bed linen, towels, crockery and cooking utensils are provided
- on-site laundry facilities available (free of charge)
- communal areas, such as the kitchen, lounge and bathrooms, are cleaned daily (Monday – Friday)
- television, communal telephone and Wi-Fi access.

Please note personal TVs require a separate TV licence, payable by the member of staff.



The People team is responsible for the accommodation guidelines and rules and for advising on people issues where required. The Facilities team is responsible for the running of the accommodation and day-to-day operational management of the facilities.

The Children's Trust is able to offer on-site accommodation staff and professional visitors on a variable duration.

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- Short-term stays (one night – up to five) consecutive nights, and on an ad-hoc basis), managed by the Housekeeping Lead Facilities team.

**Maximum period of stay is 12 months** and priority is given to new starters in need of accommodation. If accommodation is no longer required prior to the termination date stated in the license to occupy, the required notice must be given and you are liable to pay rent aligned to the notice period.

Please note accommodation is allocated according to availability and priority will be given to roles regarded as difficult to recruit to e.g., nurses. Where accommodation is oversubscribed, accommodation requests will be organised by the HRBP team and their decision is not subject to appeal.

For the avoidance of doubt, where the staff accommodation on site is full, The Children's Trust is not responsible for finding or organising staff accommodation elsewhere.



# Policies, procedures and guidelines

This section outlines some of our most widely used policies, procedures and guidelines.

Our policies aim to provide employees with a working environment that helps them pursue their careers safely, fairly and ethically, while also maintaining the integrity and reputation of The Children's Trust.

It is important to read and understand these policies, as failure to comply with them may lead to disciplinary action. This section includes policies and procedures that are not intended to be legally binding and include discretionary benefits that can be removed or changed. It is your responsibility to ensure you are familiar with the policies relevant to your role and responsibilities.

These [policies can all be found in full on The Loop](#), where you must also confirm that you have read the mandatory policies.

## Mandatory reads

- People privacy policy
- Declarations policy (conflicts of interest, personal relationships and gifts and hospitality)
- Professional boundaries and relationships at work for staff and volunteers policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Health and safety policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding

*These may vary depending on your role, and are subject to change, therefore please regularly check The Loop for the mandatory reads specific to your role.*

# Children we support

## Finn's story

Finn was diagnosed as having a mitochondrial disease (a chronic, genetic disorder) at just seven months old. After the diagnosis his doctors advised that Finn would probably not make it to his first birthday.

Overcoming the odds, as Finn began to grow so too did his needs. "He needed a lot of stimulation, and enjoyed being sociable, but it would take us two hours to get out the house just to go for a walk. And the more he grew the more I just couldn't manage," explains his mum, Debbie.

It was then that his mum was introduced to short breaks at The Children's Trust. "Starting respite at The Children's Trust completely changed our lives!"

Finn attended The Children's Trust in this way for a few years, but when he reached his teenage years, life became unmanageable for the family once more. It was then that he was accepted as a full time residential pupil at The Children's Trust School.

Debbie says: "The change in Finn is so overwhelming, it has opened up a world I never thought he would have. He has after school clubs, he is able to go swimming, and just have the life he should – like any other 14-year-old boy."

*"Finn usually comes home at weekends and we are able to visit three or four times a week. All the staff are so wonderful and I honestly don't know where we would be today without The Children's Trust School. They have changed all our lives for the better."*

- Debbie, Finn's mum

