Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

Why and who

Channel 4 knows that employees may need time off to care for their children, whether to spend quality time with them or for school-related matters, and they may not be able to use other types of leave. This policy explains unpaid parental leave, including who can use it and how to make the most of it.

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees. It is not part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

The important bits

The lingo

When it comes to any form of family leave there's lots of lingo and abbreviations. Any specific to this policy are defined here, but there's also a full glossary in the Family Policies: Guidance Document

What is unpaid parental leave?

Unpaid parental leave allows parents or those with parental responsibilities to take time off work to care for their children.

Key things to know about unpaid parental leave

- To be eligible, you must have worked continuously for Channel 4 for at least one year.
- You must be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or have (or expect to have) parental responsibility.
- You can take up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child before their 18th birthday. If you have twins, it's 36 weeks.
- It can be taken at any time in any given year in weekly blocks. The minimum you can take is one week, the maximum is four weeks per child.
- You can take unpaid parental leave at the end of other types of family leave. Specific details on these policies can be found in our family leave policies section on MOSS.
- You must give us at least 21 days' notice of when and how many weeks you want to take, so we can cover the leave.
- Please book unpaid parental leave in 4People and have it approved by your manager.
- You can take it immediately after the birth of a child or after placement for adoption.

Approval or postponements

We might have to refuse or postpone your request for unpaid parental leave if it would cause severe disruption at work. If this happens, we'll write to you within seven days of you making the request. We'll explain why and suggest new dates. Postponement will be kept to a minimum, be for no longer than 6 months and a future date will be discussed and agreed with you.

The really important bits

Benefits and pension contributions

During unpaid parental leave, you'll still get your contractual benefits, except for your salary and variable pay. If you normally make pension contributions, your employee and employer contributions might stop during the leave, but you'll be told if this would happen.

Support and related policies

If you have any questions about this policy and process, you can:

- speak to your manager
- contact the People Partnering team with specific or personal questions
- contact People Enquiries

These policies may also be useful:

Family Policies: Guidance Document

Adoption Leave Policy

Carers Leave Policy

Fertility Treatment Policy

Family/Maternity Leave Policy

Neonatal Leave Policy

Family/Parental Leave Policy

Shared Parental Leave Policy

Pregnancy Loss Policy

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Can I take time off for fertility treatments?

Yes. Channel 4 gives time off – plus other support – for those going through fertility treatments, which is different and separate to unpaid parental leave. Read the Fertility Policy for details.

If I work part-time how much time can I take off?

A 'week' is the amount of time you would usually work in 7 days. If you work part-time and your working week is three days (for example), this counts as one week's parental leave.

Can I take less than one week off?

Yes, but it counts as one week of your allowance.

Do I still get 18 weeks in total if I took some unpaid parental leave at my last job?

Unpaid parental leave is for each child – so if you took 8 weeks with a previous employer, you have 10 weeks still to take.

Can I use exceptional leave instead?

Exceptional leave is for unforeseen circumstances and emergencies, not for taking care of dependents. If you know in advance, then exceptional leave isn't appropriate. Please talk to your manager about the most appropriate leave for you to take.

Can I use unpaid parental leave if I'm a foster parent?

If you need a short absence for fostering responsibilities, your manager will decide if you can take it as unpaid parental leave.

Policy owner	People Team
Approved by	[redacted]
Date of next review	Within 3 years