

Acas publishes new guidance on neonatal care leave

2 April 2025

Workplace expert Acas has published new guidance on neonatal care leave to coincide with a change in the law this weekend.

Working parents are now entitled to additional time off while their babies are sick in hospital.

The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 comes into effect on 6 April 2025, providing a new leave and pay entitlement for parents with a baby in neonatal care.

Acas's advice provides information on what neonatal care is, who is eligible and the rights of parents who take it.

Acas Interim Chief Executive Dan Ellis said:

“Becoming new parents can be an incredibly stressful time, especially if their baby requires care in hospital for a while.

“Any employee that requires time off to help care for their child in these circumstances should be treated with compassion and understanding.

“Our advice provides employers and managers with guidance on how they can support staff members who need to take neonatal care leave.”

The new law aims to give parents the right to have up to 12 weeks leave and pay depending on how much time their baby is in neonatal care. This is in addition to other time off and pay.

The right to take neonatal care leave applies from the first day of work. Eligible parents can take neonatal care leave once their child has been in neonatal care for at least 7 consecutive days.

Caroline Lee-Davey, Chief Executive of Bliss , a charity that supports families with neonatal babies, said:

“The most supportive employers have always sought to help parents in these circumstances, but without a clear statutory framework, they’ve had to rely on measures like sick leave and compassionate leave or other improvised solutions, creating challenges for HR teams to navigate.

“This new entitlement creates a clear and defined statutory provision, recognising that the most important place for both parents to be when their baby is in neonatal care is at their cotside.”

Time off for neonatal care is available to anyone – birth parent, father or partner, spouse, civil partner or adoptive parent.

When it comes to informing their employers, parents need to self-declare and provide some extra information. Employees should contact their workplace HR representatives to go through specifics relating to their personal situation.

Parents who have a baby admitted to neonatal care up to the age of 28 days might be eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave and it must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's birth.

[Read Acas advice on neonatal care leave and pay](#)

Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office](#)

Background notes

1. For case study requests, please contact the Bliss press office on 02073785749 or DanielleManning@bliss.org.uk