

Managing leave

When parents are on neonatal care leave, managers should make sure they:

- keep in touch
- keep shared information confidential
- provide support during neonatal care leave

Any parent with the [legal status of employee](#) might be entitled to neonatal care leave.

Someone is not likely to be an employee if they're:

- an agency worker
- a casual worker
- on a zero-hours contract

People with the [legal status of worker](#) are not eligible to take statutory neonatal care leave. They can still stop working to care for their child.

Workers should still talk to their employer during any time off. This could include what to share with people they work with.

Keeping in touch

When an employee is caring for a sick child, keeping in touch with their employer might not be the main priority.

With permission from the parent, employers may find talking to a close friend or family member easier. The employer should arrange to talk to their employee directly when it is appropriate.

Employers might find it helpful to share web links with an employee to support their mental health.

For example:

- your organisation's employee assistance programme (EAP), if there's one available
- [Bliss](#) for support and information for parents with a baby in neonatal care
- [Mind](#) for mental health information and support

[Find out about supporting mental health at work](#)

Confidentiality

Employers must keep information about a baby needing neonatal care confidential. They should only tell others if the parent makes it clear they can share with other employees, clients or customers.

In some situations, an employee might want their employer to tell other people they work with. This might help others respond sensitively to the situation. Employers must agree with the parent when it's appropriate to share the information.

This conversation will probably not take place immediately. But employers should find an appropriate time to talk about this.

The first 7 days

A parent cannot take neonatal care leave for the first 7 days of neonatal care. Employers should be flexible and understanding during this time.

Parents may be able to take unpaid [time off for dependants](#). An employer might decide to paid time off as special leave.

If parents are not eligible for neonatal care leave

Some parents might not be eligible for neonatal care leave. For example, if a baby needs neonatal care for less than 7 consecutive days.

Employees might instead ask for unpaid time off work to care for this child. This is called ordinary parental leave.

Employers should be flexible and caring towards any parent who has a young child needing hospital care.

[Find out more about ordinary parental leave](#)

Contact the Acas helpline

If you have questions about neonatal care leave, [contact the Acas helpline](#).