

Pay

Parents who have a baby in neonatal care might be eligible for up to 12 weeks of neonatal care pay. Pay cannot be for less than a full week.

Entitlement to pay

To be eligible for neonatal care pay, parents must have 26 weeks of continuous service. The 26 weeks must be completed before the 'relevant week'. They must still be in employment in the week before the neonatal care pay period.

Parents must have earned at least £125 a week (£129 from 6 April 2026) on average for 8 weeks before the relevant week.

Relevant week

The relevant week is a specific week that is used to define eligibility for neonatal care pay.

The timing of the relevant week for neonatal care pay depends on any other pay a parent qualifies for.

If a parent is also taking statutory maternity or paternity pay, the relevant week is the 15th week before the week the baby is due.

If a parent is taking statutory adoption pay or paternity pay for adoption, the relevant week is when they are notified of being matched with the child.

For any other pay for family leave, the relevant week is the one immediately before the week that neonatal care starts.

The legal minimum for statutory neonatal care pay

Eligible employees are entitled to whichever is lower:

- £187.18 a week (£194.32 from 6 April 2026)
- 90% of their average weekly earnings

Some employers offer more than statutory neonatal care pay. This can be called 'enhanced' or 'contractual' neonatal care pay.

Workers not eligible for leave but eligible for pay

Workers are not usually eligible for neonatal care leave. This is because they can tell an employer they will not be working during that time so they can care for their baby. However, some workers could be eligible for neonatal care pay.

Entitlement to Statutory Neonatal Care Pay depends on someone's employment status for tax rather than employment law.

Those entitled include:

- employees
- apprentices

- agency workers
- some workers

Workers who pay their own tax are not eligible to receive Statutory Neonatal Care Pay.

[Check employment status for tax on GOV.UK](#)

Telling the employer

Parents must provide employers with notice to receive neonatal care pay. When employees should tell the employer depends if their baby is still receiving care.

If the baby is still receiving neonatal care

If parents are giving notice for neonatal care pay when the child is still receiving care, this is called the tier 1 period.

The tier 1 period:

- starts when the child has had 7 consecutive days of neonatal care
- includes 1 week after the care has ended

For tier 1, pay notice must be given within 28 days starting with the first day that the neonatal care pay is being claimed. This will be after the child has already had 7 consecutive days of neonatal care.

This means parents do not have to give notice for pay at the same time they take leave. This might be helpful for parents who are not sure how long neonatal care will be for.

Parents might give notice for both pay and leave at the same time.

For example, an employee's baby goes into care on 6 April. The first day of the week neonatal care pay is being claimed would be 14 April. The employee should give notice for pay before 12 May.

Tier 2

If parents are giving notice for neonatal care pay more than a week after the child has stopped receiving care, this is called the tier 2 period. The tier 2 period covers up to the end of 68 weeks from the date of the child's birth.

Giving notice for tier 2 pay depends on how long the pay is for.

Pay notice for 1 week's leave must be given at least 15 days before the first day.

Pay notice for 2 weeks or more of leave must be given at least 28 days before the first day.

What employees need to tell their employer

Employees must tell their employer:

- their name
- the date of the child's birth
- the date the child started to receive neonatal care, or each date if the child received neonatal care on 2 or more separate occasions
- the date that the care ended if the child is no longer receiving neonatal care
- if applicable, the date of the child's placement with the adopter or prospective adopter

- if applicable, the date of the child's entry into Great Britain to live with the overseas adopter
- if it is the first time they're requesting neonatal care leave, a declaration that the employee meets the parental relationship criteria
- that during the time the child was in neonatal care, they have cared for or intend to care for the child

Employers should make the process for requesting neonatal care pay clear in contracts or policies.

An employer can make a policy with less complicated requirements for notice.