



Adoption Leave Policy

Purpose:	This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of colleagues who are adopting a child from within the UK or overseas. It sets out entitlement to adoption leave and pay.
Scope:	<p>This Policy applies to all colleagues of the Headlam group of businesses and all subsidiaries. It applies in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colleagues adopting a child via an adoption agency• Colleagues who will become the legal parents of a child under a surrogacy arrangement• Colleagues who are local authority foster parents who are also prospective adopters ("foster to adopt") <p>This Policy does not apply to agency workers or self-employed.</p> <p>This policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment.</p>
Group or UK Only:	Group
Issuing Department:	The HR Department.
Issue/Last Review Date:	March 2026
Date of Next Review (if applicable):	March 2027

Contents Page

Contents

Introduction	3
Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	3
Eligibility to Receive Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)	3
Adoption Pay	4
Pay Rises During Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	4
Bonus Payments.....	4
Timing of Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	4
Notice Requirements	5
Time Off for Adoption Appointments	5
Rights During Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	5
Contact During Adoption Leave	6
Keeping-in-Touch days.....	6
Disrupted Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	6
Returning to Work after Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	7
Deciding Not to Return After Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL).....	7
Returning to Work Part-Time.....	7
Transfer of Adoption Leave.....	7

Introduction

Headlam would like to take this opportunity to congratulate any colleague who is reading this policy after learning that they are soon to become a parent. This is an exciting time and we are proud to be supporting you through it.

Headlam recognises that adoption laws can be complicated so we have tried to simplify them as much as possible within this policy. We understand that even after reading this policy our colleagues may still have questions, so we encourage them to contact their Line Manager or their HR Business Partner for further discussion and information.

To ensure this policy is easily understandable, we have described below the meaning of some of the terminology used:

SAL	Statutory Adoption Leave
OAL	Ordinary Adoption Leave
AAL	Additional Adoption Leave
SAP	Statutory Adoption Pay

Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

A colleague who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency is entitled to take up to 52 weeks' SAL, regardless of a Colleague's length of service, a colleague who has adopted a child, or who is one of a couple who have jointly adopted a child, has the right to take up to 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave, followed immediately (unless the child's placement has already been disrupted) by up to 26 weeks' additional adoption leave. If the child's placement ends during the adoption leave, the colleague may elect to remain on adoption leave for up to eight weeks after the end of the placement.

All colleagues who take SAL have the right to return to work at any time during either OAL or AAL, subject to them following the correct notification procedures as set out within this policy.

Eligibility to Receive Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

Colleagues will qualify for SAP if they:

- Have 26 weeks service calculated as at the week in which notification of matching was given by the adoption agency
- Have average weekly earnings not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions
- Where the colleague is one of a couple jointly adopting the child they must have chosen to receive statutory adoption pay rather than statutory paternity pay.

Colleagues who are not entitled to SAP may be entitled to receive an allowance payable directly by the Government. If a colleague is not entitled to SAP, the company will provide them with an SAP1 form to allow them to pursue a claim for an allowance from the Government.

Adoption Pay

Headlam offers generous adoption pay for those colleagues who are eligible to receive it (in accordance with the criteria set out above).

Adoption pay is payable for the first 39 weeks of a colleague's adoption leave. The first 6 weeks will be paid at the colleague's usual full rate of pay, or 90% of their average weekly earnings, whichever is higher. The following 7 weeks will be paid at the colleague's usual full rate of pay. The following 26 weeks will be paid at the rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year. The remaining 13 weeks of adoption leave is unpaid.

Adoption pay is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance contributions.

Pay Rises During Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

If a colleague becomes eligible for a pay rise whilst on SAL (whether that be OAL or AAL), the adoption pay calculations will be re-done to take into account the pay-rise. If the colleague's adoption pay entitlement is increased as a result of the recalculation, or if as a result of the recalculation the colleague will then qualify for adoption pay when they did not previously, the colleague will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between adoption pay already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

Bonus Payments

Colleagues will cease participation in any bonus schemes for the duration of their SAL. Bonuses earned prior to the commencement of SAL will be paid at the agreed time, regardless of whether or not the colleague is on SAL when the bonus becomes payable.

Timing of Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

Great Britain

In the case of a child adopted from within the UK, the period of adoption leave may begin from the date on which the child is placed with the colleague for adoption or from a fixed date up to 14 days beforehand.

Overseas

In the case of a child adopted from overseas, the period of adoption leave may begin on the date on which the child enters Great Britain or on a predetermined date that is no later than 28 days after the date on which the child entered Great Britain.

Notice Requirements

Colleagues who are adopting a child will receive a letter and/or certificate from their adoption agency notifying them that they have been matched with a child. Within 7 days of receiving this letter, the colleague must write to their line manager notifying them of their intention to take SAL. The letter must specify the date which the child is expected to be placed with the colleague for adoption and the date the colleague intends to start their SAL. The colleague must enclose a copy of their matching letter or certificate. Within 28 days of receiving the colleague's letter, the company will write to them confirming the latest date on which they must return to work after adoption leave.

In cases of adoption from overseas, colleagues must provide the company with proof that their child has entered Great Britain, in the form of entry clearance documents.

The colleague is permitted to bring forward or postpone their adoption leave start date, provided they advise their line manager in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practical.

Time Off for Adoption Appointments

Colleagues who are adopting a child are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments.

A colleague who is adopting a child alone has the legal right to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. Where a colleague is part of a couple jointly adopting a child, the couple can elect for one of them to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other can elect to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

The purpose of the appointment is to enable the colleague to have contact with the child (for example, to bond with them before the placement) and for any other purpose connected with the adoption (for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the care of the child).

The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with the colleague.

The company will ask the colleague for proof of the date and time of the appointment and that the appointment has been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency (for example, a letter or email from the adoption agency).

Rights During Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

During SAL, all terms and conditions of the colleague's contract, except normal pay, will continue. Salary will be replaced by adoption pay if the colleague is eligible for it. This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, other benefits such as holiday and company car entitlement will remain in place.

The company's pension contributions will continue based on the colleague's normal pay during OAL. However, the employer's pension contributions will cease during any periods of unpaid AAL. The

colleague will remain in any life assurance and/or private medical insurance schemes that they are already in.

Colleagues are encouraged to take any outstanding holiday due to them before the commencement of adoption leave. Colleagues are reminded that holiday must be taken in the year that it is earned.

Contact During Adoption Leave

The company reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with colleagues during adoption leave. This may be to discuss their plans for returning to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence.

Keeping-in-Touch days

Colleagues can agree to work for the company (or to attend training) for up to 10 days during their adoption leave without bringing their adoption leave to an end and without loss of a week's SAP. These are known as "keeping-in-touch" days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes.

A colleague will receive their normal rate of pay for keeping in touch days and any adoption pay they receive will be off-set against this.

The company has no right to require colleagues to carry out any work and colleagues have no right to undertake any work during their adoption leave. Days of work during adoption leave must be agreed with the Line Manager.

Disrupted Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

In the case of a child adopted within the UK, if, after the Colleague has begun their adoption leave, the expected placement does not occur, or, once the child has been placed, the child dies or is returned to the adoption agency, the employee's adoption leave will end eight weeks after the end of the week in which:

- The adopter is notified that the placement will not be made;
- The child dies; or
- The child is returned.

In the case of a child adopted from overseas, if, during the adoption leave, the child dies or ceases to live with the adopter, the employee's adoption leave will end eight weeks after the end of the week in which:

- The child dies; or

- The child ceases to live with the adopter.

Regardless of whether the child is adopted within the UK or from overseas, the adoption leave will in any event end at the end of the additional adoption leave period, even if this is less than eight weeks since the date of the disruption.

Returning to Work after Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

Colleagues may return to work at any time during OAL or AAL, provided they give the appropriate notification. Alternatively, they may take their full period of SAL and return to work at the end of this period. If the colleague wishes to return before the full period of SAL has elapsed, they must give at least eight weeks' notice in writing to the company of the date on which they intend to return.

The colleague has the right to resume working in the same job if returning to work from OAL. If the colleague returns to work after a period of AAL, they 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.

Failure to return to work by the end of SAL will be treated as an unauthorised absence unless the colleague is sick and produces a current medical certificate before the end of the SAL period.

Deciding Not to Return After Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

If a colleague decides during SAL that they do not wish to return to work, they should give written notice of resignation to the company as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of their contract of employment.

In circumstances where a colleague does not return to work following their SAL or if they return for a period of time which is shorter than their contractual notice period, the enhanced adoption pay they received during their SAL over and above their basic SAP entitlement will be repayable to the company. If possible, the total amount repayable will be deducted directly via payroll from any payments owing to the colleague.

Returning to Work Part-Time

We will deal with any requests by colleagues to change their working patterns (such as working part-time) after SAL on a case-by-case basis. There is no legal right to insist on working part-time, but colleagues do have a statutory right to request flexible working and we will try to accommodate their wishes unless there is a justifiable reason for refusal, bearing in mind the needs of the company. It is helpful if requests are made as early as possible.

Transfer of Adoption Leave

In some cases, a colleague and their spouse may be eligible to share SAL. Information about how to do this can be found in the [Shared Parental Leave \(Adoptions\) Policy](#).

End of Policy