30% Club Financial Services Sub-committee
Sample Policies
Open Source Policy Bank

This bank serves to act as a reference point for 30% Club members when forming their Diversity & Inclusion policies.

We have a number of policies from companies within the financial services industry. Within the policy bank, we have divided these policies into similar themes.

From these policies, we have identified the key themes included within each policy topic.

This section includes 3 sample policies on Parental Leave.
Top 5 things to include in company policies

**Agile / Flexible hours working policy (we are providing 3 policy examples)**
1. To whom it applies
2. What is included as agile / flexible working e.g. hours, location,
3. Process for applying or agreeing new arrangements
4. Limitations / restrictions to the policy
5. Legal and other company requirements

**Diversity / Equality policy (we are providing 4 policy examples)**
1. To whom it applies
2. Ways in which the company offers equal opportunities for all
3. Merit based progression opportunities
4. Support of those with disability
5. Company response to reported discrimination

**Maternity Leave policy (we are providing 3 policy examples)**
1. Doctor appointments, antenatal class and post natal support
2. Paid and unpaid leave timeframes
3. Annual leave and public holiday entitlements
4. Legal entitlements
5. Early births, deaths and other considerations during leave
Top 5 things to include in company policies

Paternity leave policy (we are providing 3 policy examples)
1. Qualifying for leave
2. Leave Entitlements
3. Applications to the Department of Social Protection
4. Stipulations of the leave policy
5. Early births, deaths and other considerations during leave

Parental leave policies (we are providing 3 policy examples)
1. Qualifying for leave
2. Statutory entitlements
3. Public holidays and annual leave
4. Application procedure
5. Illness and other reasons for suspension or postponement of leave

Other policy examples available
1. Compassionate / Force Majeure / Emergency Family Leave
2. Well Being Policy
3. Dignity Policy

Additional Case Studies available
1. Flexible working
2. Gender balance
3. Equal opportunities
Parental Leave Policy – Sample 1

Introduction
The purpose of this policy is to provide clear standards and principles around parental leave.

Scope
This policy applies to all parents (natural, adoptive or acting in loco parentis), employed by X who have children under 18 years.

Policy Statement
Our parental leave policy allows you to take an unpaid break from work to care for your children. The law states that you can take this leave in block format, but to better suit your needs we also offer you the option to apply for parental leave in a reduced hours format and, in ROI, the option to apply for shorter block periods than required by law. We have recently increased the age limit (for the relevant child) to 18 years in both ROI and UK.

You will need to apply for parental leave and get management approval. We try to facilitate all requests but of course it depends on business requirements.

Parental leave is unpaid and pension and other benefits are pro-rated based on agreed working hours. Annual leave continues to accrue as normal based on your full time working arrangements.

Standards Common to ROI & UK
• As a parent (natural, adoptive or acting in loco parentis) if you have more than one year’s continuous service you are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave (or pro rata equivalent). If you have more than three months service, and your child is about to reach the age threshold you are entitled to 1 weeks leave for each month of continuous service.
• Each parent has a separate entitlement of 18 weeks. Where both are working for the organisation, and at the sole discretion of the organisation, up to 14 weeks leave (or pro rata equivalent) can be transferred from one parent to the other. This is subject to the consent of both people leaders prior to the transfer of the leave.
• You must take parental leave before your child reaches 18 years of age or the leave will be forfeited (unless it was subject to postponement).
Standards Common to RoI & UK contd

• Where you qualify for parental leave in respect of more than one child or where additional leave has been agreed* (excluding case of multiple births e.g. twins triplets etc) you cannot take more than 18 weeks parental leave in any 12 months period unless by agreement with the Organisation, or where a child is due to reach the maximum age by the end of the year
• On return from parental leave you may request a change to working hours or working patterns under the organisations Flexible Working policy

Guidelines Common to RoI & UK

• It is your responsibility to keep a record of any parental leave (both block and reduced hours) already taken for submitting with your application
• You can withdraw the application any time up until the issue of the confirmation notice. Once a written confirmation document has been signed by the organisation and employee the organisation will not postpone parental leave
• If you become ill and as a result are unable to care for your child you can choose to end the parental leave and avail of sick leave instead (sick leave must be medically certified). On recovery from your illness you can then resume the period of parental leave
• If you become ill just before you are due to take parental leave, the start date of the leave will be postponed until after you recover. In such circumstances you should contact your line manager and provide them with a medical certificate to postpone the leave.
• Where a bank/public holiday occurs within the period of leave being taken then you will receive an unpaid day off at the end of the parental leave
• Where you are on parental leave reduced hours and are scheduled to work on a bank holiday you will automatically be paid for those scheduled hours. Where you are not scheduled to work on the bank/public holiday you should claim 1/5 of your parental leave working week hour as additional hours on HR online.
ROI INFORMATION

In ROI you can apply to take your parental leave in four ways;

1. The legislation entitles you to apply for a minimum of 6 weeks block leave provided that there is a ten week gap between each such block and your child is under the age of 8 years. If the business are unable to grant leave in this way it should typically be postponed once for up to six months, but in exceptional circumstances it may be postponed twice.

2. In addition to the above legislative entitlement, the Organisation also offers you the facility to apply for leave in minimum of 1 week blocks up to your child’s 18th birthday. Where this does not suit business requirements then a longer period should be considered. If the business are not able to grant leave in these shorter blocks it is not considered a postponement.

3. You also have the option of applying for parental leave as a reduced hours working option up to your child’s 18th birthday if you meet the following criteria;
   i. You must apply under existing work schedules and
   ii. Your contract must be for a minimum of 3 months.
   iii. If the business are unable to grant parental leave in this way it is not considered a postponement.

4. Where a child is disabled you can apply to take leave in individual days.

APPLYING FOR PARENTAL LEAVE – ROI

You must apply at least six weeks before the start of parental leave.
The Organisation will respond to your request no later than 4 weeks before the date given as the first day of requested leave.
The purpose of the parental leave policy is to provide unpaid leave to employees with children under the age of eight or under sixteen in the case of children with disabilities and who have one year’s continuous service with the Company.

Employees who have completed at least 12 months continuous service with the company are entitled to parental leave. Where the employee has more than 3 months’ but less than 1 year’s service, and where the child is approaching the age threshold, the employee will be entitled to 1 weeks leave for every month of continuous employment completed. This leave must be fully used by the time the child reaches eight years of age, or 16 if the child concerned has a disability.

In the case of an adopted child, who is under 8 years at the time of the adoption, the leave must be taken before the child reaches 8 years of age. If the child is aged between 6 and 8 years, at the time of the adoption, the leave must be taken within 2 years of the adoption order.

Where a parent has more than one child, they may not take more than 18 weeks parental leave in any 12-month period, except in the case of multiple births.

Employees will be entitled to up to 18 weeks parental leave.

The period of parental leave may be broken down but only with the agreement in writing of the Company, where the business is in a position to support same.

At a minimum there is a statutory entitlement to take the 18 weeks parental leave in 2 separate blocks of a minimum of 6 continuous weeks.

Consideration will be given to the business requirements within the relevant area when dealing with such requests.
**Parental Leave Policy – Sample 2**

**Protection of Employment Rights**
The period of parental leave will also count as reckonable service for the purpose of annual leave. An employee on parental leave will retain their entitlement to any public holidays, which fall during the period of parental leave.

Where an employee is on parental leave and where public holidays occur during that time the public holidays shall be added to the end of the period of parental leave.

Where an employee qualifies for parental leave in respect of more than one child at any one time, an employee may not take more than 18 weeks parental leave in any 12-month period. However, this restriction does not apply in respect of multiple births (i.e. twins, triplets etc.).

**Transfer of Leave**
Under the Parental Leave (Amendment) Act 2006 each parent is entitled to a separate entitlement of parental leave and this leave is not normally transferable, however parental leave may be transferred from one parent to another where both parents are employed by the Company, but subject to the employer’s agreement. Leave taken with another employer will count towards the 18-week entitlement.

**Manner in which Parental Leave can be taken**
Each parent is entitled to eighteen weeks parental leave. The period of parental leave may be broken down but only with the agreement in writing of the Company, where the business is in a position to support same. At a minimum there is a statutory entitlement to take the 18 weeks parental leave in 2 separate blocks of a minimum of 6 continuous weeks.

**Illness during Parental Leave**
If an employee falls ill while on parental leave and as a result is unable to care for the child he or she may suspend the parental leave for the duration of the illness following which period the parental leave recommences; subject to the rules of the Absence & Timekeeping policy and with the employers agreement.
Parental Leave Policy – Sample 2

Procedure
• An employee must give notice of his or her intention to take parental leave to their manager no later than six weeks before the employee proposes to commence the leave.
• The notice must include the following:
  1. The date on which the employee intends to take the parental leave.
  2. The duration of the parental leave.
  3. The manner in which the employee intends to take the parental leave.
• The employee must also forward to the Company a completed parental leave application form together with the child’s birth certificate.
• Where the Company has approved the request for parental leave this will be confirmed in writing and a confirmation document issued to the employee.

Revocation of Notice of Intention to Take Parental Leave
The employee may at any time advise of their intention to revoke their intention to take parental leave by confirming this in writing to the Company.

Postponement of parental leave by the employer
• The Company may postpone the granting of parental leave for up to six months if the granting of leave at the particular time would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business.
• The Company will advise the employee of the postponement of the parental leave at least four weeks before the date the employee was due to take the parental leave.
The notice to the employee will state the reasons for the postponement of the parental leave.
Abuse of Parental Leave
Where the organisation has reasonable grounds for believing that an employee who is on parental leave is not using the leave for the purpose for which it is intended, the organisation may, by notice in writing given to the employee, terminate the leave and the notice will contain a statement in summary form of the grounds for terminating the leave and will specify the day by which the employee must return to work.

If, following an investigation, an employee is found to have abused this leave, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal

Returning to Work
Subject to the terms of the Act the employee is entitled to return to work to the same job, and under the same contract of employment, terms and conditions. Where this is not reasonably practicable suitable alternative employment will be provided.
3. INTRODUCTION
This document sets out the Company policy in respect of Parental Leave i.e. leave which is provided for employees who require temporary unpaid time off work to take care of their children or a child in respect of which the employee is in *loco parentis*. Parental Leave is granted in accordance with the Parental Leave Acts 1998 - 2006 (referred to as “the Acts”).

The Company reserves the right to review, revise, amend, or replace the contents of this policy and to introduce new policies and procedures from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the Agency. In cases where policies and procedures may be out of line with relevant legislation, the relevant legislation always takes precedence.

3.1. Purpose and Objectives - Protected Status
During any period of leave or time off under the Acts an employee remains in the employment of the Company and will be treated as if they were not absent –except with respect to remuneration. Employees absent on Parental Leave will benefit from any improvements in terms and conditions of employment during their absence e.g. salary reviews.

The Acts provide an employee with rights to:

- a) protection against any unfair or unfavourable treatment or dismissal on grounds of exercising any of their rights under the Acts;
- b) return to work in the same job and with the same contract of employment as they held prior to taking leave or a suitable alternative role which will be on terms that are not less favourable than those of the previous job.

In addition, the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977 - 2007 provide that in the case of a dismissal of an employee for exercise of their rights under the Acts, such matters will fall within the scope of the Unfair Dismissal Acts 1977-2007.

4. SCOPE
This policy applies to all employees of the Company. An employee of the Company is defined as anyone who has a contract of employment with the Company (including without limitation a fixed term or specified purpose contract) regardless of the entity or Business Unit within which they are assigned to work, and regardless of the hours they work.
4. SCOPE contd
In order to be eligible for Parental Leave an employee must have completed 12 months continuous service with the Company, be a natural, adopting or adoptive parent, or be acting in loco parentis (as a legal guardian or where the employee is actively parenting the child on an ongoing basis), and fall into one of the following categories:

- has a child aged between 0 and 8 years;
- has a child is between the age of 6 and 8 and is the subject of an adoption order, when Parental Leave in respect of that child may be taken up to 2 years after the date of the adoption order;
- has a child with a disability or a long-term illness - when Parental Leave in respect of that child may be taken up to the point where the disability or long term illness ceases or the child reaches 16 years of age, whichever occurs first.

In addition an extension may also be allowed where illness or other incapacity prevented the employee taking the Parental Leave within the normal period.

4.1. Probation or Training Periods, Fixed Term Contracts (including Specified Purpose)
If an employee takes Parental Leave during a probation period or a training period and the absence is considered to be inconsistent with the probation or training period, they will have their contract, probation or training period suspended for the duration of the Parental Leave and will re-commence such period on their return to work. However, where an employee on a fixed-term contract or special purpose contract takes Parental Leave and such contract ends during the period of Parental Leave, then the employee’s contract of employment automatically terminates on that date.

4.2. Length of service - exceptions
Generally an employee must have completed 12 months service with the Company before they become entitled to Parental Leave. Service on fixed-term and part-time contracts is included when calculating the service requirement. However, if the employee has completed three months service with the Company and the child is approaching the age threshold, the employee is entitled to pro-rata Parental Leave of one week’s leave for every month of employment completed.
POLICY

6.1. Entitlement and Duration of Parental Leave
Eligible employees are entitled to unpaid Parental Leave of up to 18 working weeks duration. It is not an annual entitlement; it is available to each parent for each child that meets the conditions set out in section 4 above. Where an employee works part-time; a working week means the part-time employee’s normal working week e.g. 3 days a week.

Where an employee has more than one child, Parental Leave is limited to 18 weeks in any 12-month period, except with agreement of the Company. Parents of multiple birth children (twins, etc) are not subject to this limit.

Where two parents have a Parental Leave entitlement for the same child, both have an equal separate entitlement and can only claim their own leave entitlement. However, if both parents work for the Company, with the Company’s agreement, either parent may transfer 14 weeks leave entitlement to the other parent.

If an employee has recently joined the Company and has taken some leave with a previous employer, they may use the balance with the Company following one year’s service (see also section 4.2 above).

6.2. How Parental Leave may be taken
Parental Leave may be taken in one continuous period, or in two separate blocks, with a minimum of six weeks in either block. There must be a gap of at least 10 weeks between the periods of Parental Leave when taken in blocks. However, if the Line Manager agrees, and depending on individual the employee to take Parental Leave as periods of days or hours. Such alternative arrangements are absolutely at the discretion of the Company and may be altered at the direction of the Company if Company business needs require. If an employee is working part-time the maximum leave entitlement of 18 weeks is reduced pro-rata to reflect their part-time normal working week.

6.3. Parental Leave following on from other leave
Subject to the business requirements of the Company at the time, the Company may allow Parental Leave to be taken immediately after maternity/additional maternity leave, or adoptive /additional adoptive leave provided the employee complies with the service and notification procedures.
Parental Leave Policy – Sample 3

6.4. Notification Procedures from the Employee
Entitlement to Parental Leave and protections under the Acts are subject to an employee observing the required notification procedures outlined in the Acts. An employee must give written notice to the Line Manager of their proposal to take Parental Leave, not later than 6 weeks before the proposed commencement of the leave. The notice must be signed by the employee and must include:

1. the duration of leave they wish to take;
2. the date on which the employee wishes to commence the leave;
3. the manner in which the leave will be taken (e.g. continuous, in blocks, days);
4. evidence of entitlement to Parental Leave (e.g. the child’s date of birth, date of the adoption order, evidence of parentage / being in a position of loco parentis, etc.).

Following receipt of the notice, the Company may postpone the commencement of Parental Leave for up to six months if it considers it necessary (for example) if there are difficulties finding a replacement or the business would be unduly disrupted. In such event the Line Manager will consult with the employee and any postponement together with the grounds for the postponement will be notified to the employee in writing, no later than 4 weeks before the proposed date of commencement specified in the employee’s notice.

6.4.1. Revoking a notification
An employee may revoke their notice of intention to take Parental Leave at any time before a confirmation document (see section 6.5 below) is signed. Such revocation must also be provided in writing.

6.5. Confirmation of Parental Leave from the Employer
Once notification of the intention to take Parental Leave has been made and following consultation with the Line Manager, the HR Department will prepare a confirmation document. The details of the confirmation document are to be agreed by the Line Manager and approved by the Senior Executive. The confirmation document will be prepared no later than 4 weeks before the leave is due to begin. It must be signed by the employee and on behalf of the Company and must include:

1. the employee name, address and PPSN No;
2. the date on which the leave will commence;
3. the duration of the leave and the manner in which the leave will be taken;
4. a note of the Public Holidays that will fall due during the leave period;
5. the arrangements for any salary deductions e.g. VHI contributions during a period of leave.

Once a confirmation document has been signed by the employee and the Company it cannot be altered unless both parties agree to the change. These documents are important records and will be kept by the HR Department on the employee file and be available for inspection, for up to 8 years. A copy of the confirmation document will be provided to the employee.
6.6. End of Parental Leave Entitlement
On expiry of Parental Leave entitlements or as agreed in the confirmation document, the employee will return to a normal working week.

6.6.1. Department of Social Protection Benefit / Salary
The Department of Social Protection does not make any benefit payments to employees while on Parental Leave. Company policy reflects this practice and the Company does not pay remuneration to an employee while on such leave.

6.6.2. PRSI Credits during leave
An employee’s PRSI record will be preserved while on Parental Leave. The HR Department will write to the Department of Social Protection after an employee returns to work, detailing the weeks days/time the employee has been absent, so that they can obtain credited PRSI contributions for this time.

6.6.3. Entitlement to Annual Leave and Public Holidays
During a period of Parental Leave, entitlement to Annual Leave and Public Holidays accrue as normal. Unless the Line Manager agrees otherwise, any such leave or holiday entitlement accumulated should be taken before a return to work, in particular, when Parental Leave is taken in a continuous block.

6.6.4. Pension Arrangements
During any absence on Parental Leave, pensionable service and pension benefits accrue as normal.

6.6.5. All other benefits and deductions
- **Car Benefit or VHI Contributions:** Where an employee has the use of a company car, or is entitled to have VHI contributions paid on their behalf, these benefits will remain in place during any period of Parental Leave, regardless of the pattern of leave, with no adjustment to salary on return to work.
- **Car allowances:** Where a car allowance is payable, this may, at the Company’s discretion, be suspended or reduced pro rata depending on the pattern of leave.
- **Mobile Phones:** Where a mobile phone is provided to an employee this may remain in the possession of the employee. Employees should be mindful of personal usage as outlined in the mobile phone usage policy and the Company reserves the right to make salary adjustments relating to the phone bills in line with that Company policy.
6.6.5. All other benefits and deductions

Any other deductions from salary:

- Where an employee takes Parental Leave in a continuous block of 6 weeks or more, and pays via payroll deduction for VHI group scheme subscriptions, they will be advised that the Company will pay these amounts on their behalf during the entire period of leave and will deduct these payments in full from any salary, holiday pay, or any other such remuneration due to the employee on their return to work.
- Where an employee takes Parental Leave in a continuous block of 13 weeks or more and is paying other deductions via payroll such as travel tickets, bike to work scheme etc., they will be advised to suspend, cancel or make arrangements to have these payments made via an alternative method.

Remote Access: Access to the Company’s email system via Blackberry or remote access devices will be suspended unless otherwise approved by the Senior Executive, where the duration of leave is a continuous period of 13 weeks or more.

6.7. Suspension or Postponement of Parental Leave due to Illness

If an employee becomes ill after a confirmation document has been signed and is unable to care for the child, the Parental Leave can, with the agreement of the Line Manager and the HR Department, be suspended or postponed for the duration of the illness. In order to suspend or postpone leave the employee must give written notice and evidence of the illness to the employer as soon as is reasonably practicable. During illness the employee will be treated in accordance with the Company Sick Leave policy and the Parental Leave (or remainder thereof) may resume after the illness. The confirmation document will be amended accordingly.

6.8. Termination of Parental Leave by the employer

The purpose of Parental Leave is to facilitate an employee in taking care of their children or a child in respect of which the employee is in loco parentis. If Parental Leave is used for a purpose other than taking care of the child concerned, the Company may notify the employee in writing of the termination of the Parental Leave, a summary of the grounds for the termination and that they will be required to return to work on a date within seven days from the date of receipt by the employee of the notice.
6.9. Keeping in contact during continuous periods of leave
If Parental Leave is to be taken in one block of 18 weeks, the Line Manager should discuss the extent to which an employee wishes to be kept up to date with work issues during the leave. Typically, job vacancies, details of business changes or Company announcements may be circulated by email.

6.10. Return to work and change in work pattern
Following the end of a period of Parental Leave an employee will return to work as outlined in section 3.1b above and will benefit immediately from any changes to terms or conditions (e.g. salary review) that occurred while on leave. The Line Manager should contact the employee in advance of their expected return to discuss plans to return. An employee may request a change in work pattern or working hours subject to and in accordance with the Company Flexible Working Policy.

6.11. Resignation during Parental Leave
If an employee resigns during or after Parental Leave, the employee is required to give notice in accordance with normal requirements in their contract of employment.

7. BREACH OF POLICY
Breach of this policy may be dealt with in accordance with the Company Disciplinary Procedures and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken; in particular the Company reserves the right to refuse Parental Leave where proper records of entitlement to Parental Leave cannot be maintained or where it has reasonable grounds to believe that Parental Leave is being used for a purpose other than taking care of or spending time with a relevant child. Failure to comply with this policy, (in particular see section 6.5 above) could impact the employees’ rights to continued employment or protected status under the legislation.

The Company must keep records of all Parental Leave taken by employees. These records must include the period of employment of each employee and the dates and times of the leave taken. The HR Department will keep and retain records for 8 years.