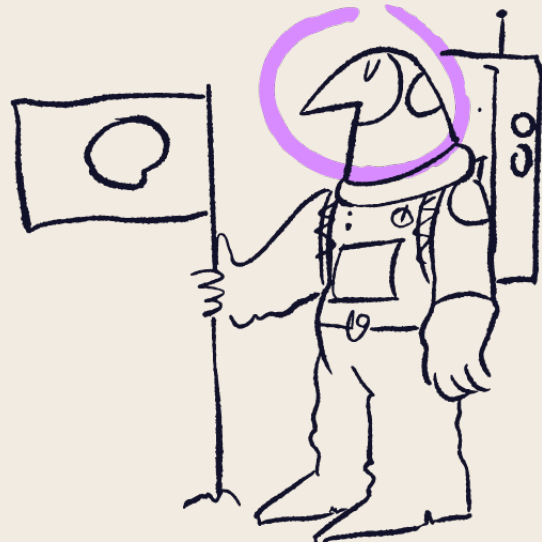


# Parental leave policy



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COO at CharlieHR

# Quick guide



## ○ What will I be paid?

- We offer 6 weeks of fully paid leave and a further 6 weeks paid at 50% of your salary.
- This leave can be taken in blocks (apart from the first two weeks after the birth, which mother must take time off in accordance with UK law).
- After these 12 weeks, our policy provides 14 weeks of leave paid at 25% of your salary, or the statutory pay rate – whichever is higher.

## ○ Can I get time off for appointments?

- Of course! Throughout the pregnancy, we offer flexible working hours for both mothers and fathers to attend antenatal appointments or classes.

## ○ What about when I return to work?

- We'll review every new parent's return to work on a case by case basis.
- If you'd like to return to work part time, we have some flexibility which we'll discuss with you.

## ○ What might working part-time look like?

- At the very least, for the first 3 months, we'd like you to work 3 full working days with the option to do adjusted working hours.

Right now, statutory maternity and paternity leave in the UK is in a pretty muddled state. Over the last few years, there's been a few law changes to try and encourage new parents to share childcare in a more equitable way – however, those law changes are far from perfect and haven't really succeeded.



To get the full picture on statutory UK parental leave and exactly how it's falling down, you can read our full blogpost here. But to get an overview of how we've chosen to approach parental leave at Charlie, simply read on:

When we wrote our parental leave policy, we knew that we wanted to achieve two things.

- To provide the same level of support to both new mothers and new fathers
- To give both sets of parents real choice and flexibility about how they use that leave

With those objectives in mind, here's what we decided to offer:

## **1. Complete flexibility for antenatal appointments for both mothers and fathers**

Throughout the pregnancy, we offer flexible working hours for both mothers and fathers for antenatal appointments or classes.

Under UK law, if you're pregnant, you're entitled to take a "reasonable" amount of time off to attend antenatal appointments. Your partner can take time off for two appointments (lasting a maximum of 6.5 hours per appointment), but that time is unpaid.

What we've found is that any incentive against taking this time can lead to mothers (and fathers) skipping what could be critical appointments. Both for the health of the mother and to ensure that fathers can get equally involved in the pre-birth process, we chose to allow all of our employees who are pregnant or have pregnant partners to work flexible hours when those appointments come up.

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## 2. Equal benefits for both parents

We offer 6 weeks of fully paid leave, and another 6 weeks paid at 50%. All of this can be taken in blocks, apart from the first two weeks after the birth, where the mother must take time off in accordance with UK law. After this, our policy provides 14 weeks of maternity leave paid at 25% of their salary, or the statutory pay rate – whichever the higher amount is.

That is very different from the legal minimum requirement for both parents, but it's especially different for fathers. Under the government's default system, fathers using shared parental leave will only ever receive £145.18 per week (or 90% of their average weekly earnings, if that's lower). If they don't use shared parental leave, fathers get just two weeks of leave – at that same low rate of pay. Either way, they never get access to the higher rate of statutory pay that mothers receive for the first six weeks.

## 3. Real control over parental leave

True flexibility is not just about making sure both parents can have the same type of leave. It's also about providing the option to take this leave when most needed. Both the maternity and paternity leave that we offer can be taken in chunks with prior agreement.

This is one point where we felt we could really change the way parental leave worked: not one long, continuous leave but bits and pieces when needed most.

This type of flexibility for mothers and fathers gives them options in the way they choose to take their leave.

The CharlieHR parental policy is our take on the level of support parents should have when starting or expanding a family. Yes, it was created by childless founders. But it was created by reaching out to a wide variety of parents, gaining their input, and then thoroughly considering the level of support that we would one day need if we decided to start a family.