**VEEVE Adoption Leave Policy**

Policy statement

Every effort is made to support employees who are engaged in the process of adopting a child. This policy sets out the procedures that should be followed to ensure a smooth handover at the start and end of adoption leave.

Adoption leave

As soon as practicable after notifying Veeve that you will be adopting a child, arrangements will be made for you to meet with your Manager. This will be an informal interview, the purpose of which is to confirm that:

* your right to ordinary and additional adoption leave is understood, including the requirements to give appropriate notice
* the right to return is explained, together with any potential opportunities for flexible working arrangements
* arrangements for time off are known, and any possible health and safety concerns are discussed
* you know your entitlements to payment during adoption leave.

We recognise that arrangements for cover during the period of adoption leave, and also for enabling you to keep in touch with any developments at work are important for ensuring smooth transitions at each stage. Before the start of adoption leave, you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and also for remaining in contact whilst you are on leave.

These arrangements will be finalised in consultation with you as far as possible. If you have staff reporting to you, you will be involved in all decisions relating to the temporary reporting arrangements to cover your adoption leave.

In addition, you will usually remain on circulation lists for internal memoranda and other documents, and will be included in invitations to work-related social events.

We will try to ensure that adoption leave does not cause you any long-term disadvantage in relation to your training needs and self-development.

As you have a right to return to work in your old job, we will seek to avoid placing you into a position of potential redundancy whilst on adoption leave. In accordance with statutory requirements, where job losses are unavoidable you will be given first consideration for any suitable alternative employment that may arise.

At least two weeks before you are due to return to work, you will be invited for an informal meeting with your Manager. This is in order to discuss any points concerning your return to work. These include:

* updating you on developments at work
* considering whether any retraining needs have arisen because of your absence from work or new technical or other developments. It is our aim to ensure that your adoption leave does not put you at a disadvantage in relation to skills or other training needs
* providing you with the opportunity of indicating whether you wish to be considered for flexible working arrangements
* providing you with an opportunity to discuss and explain any necessary and unavoidable changes to your work.

The right to adoption leave

Adoption leave and pay will be available to:

* employees who adopt
* one member of a couple where the couple adopt jointly. In this case, the couple may choose which partner takes adoption leave. The partner who doesn’t take the adoption leave may be entitled to paternity leave and/or shared parental leave.

Qualification

To qualify for adoption leave you must:

* be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency; this right will not therefore apply to step-parents adopting a stepchild

Length of leave

The period of Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) is 26 weeks and the period of Additional Adoption Leave (AAL) is a further 26 weeks. All employees, regardless of length of service, are entitled to 52 weeks adoption leave in respect of the adoption of a child after 5th April 2015 provided they comply with the notification requirements detailed in this policy. After leave has commenced, should the placement of the child end for some reason, then the OAL will end 8 weeks after that date.

Whilst in the process of adoption, the primary adopter is entitled to paid time off for up to 5 adoption appointments and the secondary adopter unpaid time off for up to 2 such appointments (up to a maximum of 6.5 hours per appointment).

When can adoption leave start?

Adoption leave can start:

* from the date of the child’s placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or
* from a fixed date which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

Adoption pay

The statutory scheme provides for 39 weeks’ pay at the current statutory rate or 90% of your average weekly earnings if this is less than the current statutory rate.

Notification

You are required to inform your Manager in writing of your intention to take adoption leave within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption, unless this is not reasonably practicable. You will need to state:

* when the child is expected to be placed with you and
* when you want your adoption leave to start.

You will also have to provide us with a ‘matching certificate’ from the adoption agency.

You can change your mind about the date you want to start your adoption leave, but will have to inform your Manager at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

We will write to you within 28 days of receiving your notice, setting out the date on which we expect you to return to work if the full entitlement to adoption leave is taken.

Contractual benefits

You will continue to receive your contractual benefits during your ordinary adoption leave period and your additional adoption leave period (apart from remuneration).

Holidays

While you are on ordinary and additional adoption leave your contractual holiday entitlement continues to accrue.

Returning to work

You have the right to return:

* with your seniority and similar rights
* on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied if you had not been absent.

You will not be subject to any detriment by the company because you took or sought to take adoption leave.

If you wish to return to work before the end of your adoption leave period, you must give at least eight weeks’ advance notice in writing.

Keeping in touch days

You are entitled to work for up to 10 days during your adoption leave without affecting your eligibility to Statutory Adoption Pay. These days could be for training, or just for “keeping in touch” (KIT days). You are under no obligation to work these days, and we are under no obligation to provide these days. We will contact you if the opportunity for any such days arises. Any payment for these days will depend on the type of work, training or activity and will be agreed between you and the company.