

The Smallest Things Employer with Heart Charter – Supporting Parents of Premature Babies

Mums and Dads facing the worry and uncertainty of visiting their premature baby in hospital should not spend that time as maternity or paternity leave. We understand that premature babies need more time; time to develop, time to grow and time for mums and babies to bond at home after neonatal intensive care. That's why we're signing up to The Smallest Things Employer with Heart Charter – supporting parents of premature babies.

We agree to:

Extend maternity leave for mothers who give birth prematurely (before 37 weeks gestation) by the number of days a baby was born prior to their due date. We will pay extended leave at full pay and this may be classed as compassionate leave.

Give partners the time they need to be with their baby in hospital, receiving at least two weeks' paid compassionate leave on the birth of their premature baby. Partners may wish to save or split their parental leave, being there when their baby comes home from hospital. We understand that plans may change depending upon the baby's medical needs, that additional compassionate leave may be required and that the date a baby will come home from hospital is rarely set in stone.

Support parents returning to work following the birth of a premature baby. We understand that returning to work can be a difficult time for parents of premature babies and that babies born too soon can have ongoing medical needs, requiring regular hospital appointments and check-ups. We therefore follow the ACAS best practice guidance, considering formal and informal flexible working patterns and offering additional paid or unpaid leave.