

**Report to:** People, Culture and Remuneration Committee  
**Date of meeting:** 17 November 2021  
**Subject:** Family Friendly Policies  
**COG Sponsor:** Rachael Etebar, Director of People & Culture  
**For:** Decision

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## 1. PURPOSE OF PAPER

1.1 To seek BTPA agreement to increasing our support for employees suffering from miscarriage/baby loss before the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy and support new parents with improved paternity leave.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September 2020 we increased our maternity and adoption leave entitlement to 26 weeks full pay. We also introduced two weeks paid parental bereavement leave for parents/adoptive parents who suffered a stillbirth after the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. These measures were well received by our employees.
- 2.2 As part of our inclusion aspirations, we want to become more family friendly and a leader in policing in providing support to our employees; building a brand that attracts and retains employees and this paper outlines our proposals to do so.
- 2.3 Private companies such as Channel 4 and Monzo are taking steps towards a more open culture around reproductive health in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> However, we would be the first known to do so in policing.

### Miscarriage Leave

2.4 Currently when an employee miscarries before 24 weeks they are granted compassionate leave or may take time off sick. We have no specific “pregnancy loss” leave. (If the miscarriage is after 24 weeks the employee is entitled to full maternity/paternity leave (length of service applies) or two weeks full paid parental bereavement leave.)

This proposal seeks to encompass all baby loss including abortion.

The data below sets out recorded miscarriages. We cannot give assurance this captures all those affected due to the nature of recorded data, many may not declare the true reason, and a high likelihood that some people may have taken sick leave, and also not declared the true reason.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Finews.co.uk%2Fopinion%2Fpaid-leave-abortion-pregnancy-loss-radical-and-compassionate-move-993874&data=04%7C01%7CShant.Hayre%40btp.police.uk%7C4c018396374e48e9a4ae08d91644e3d6%7Ceb2bff6b272a486693ba80cbe481fd29%7C0%7C0%7C637565307861305213%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikh1WwILCjJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=7ZsmPhoUXhR9HDKzencoS%2FEtuellmJi6LhTTQZPtBYc%3D&reserved=0>

| Date                    | Number of employees who reported miscarriage | Number of employees who took compassionate leave due to miscarriage |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2019 | 13   | 11  |
| 01/01/2020 – 31/12/2020 | 18   | 18  |

2.6 It is important to note our data only reflects those who are typically at MATB1 stage: second trimester. We have no information where earlier miscarriages have occurred, as employees are likely to have taken absence as compassionate leave, where actual reasons are not captured. Research shows that most miscarriages happen in the first trimester before the 12th week of pregnancy<sup>2</sup>.

### Paternity Leave

2.7 Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, 100 colleagues took paternity leave. 39 of these individuals only took one week with the remaining 61 taking two weeks. Paternity leave is currently paid as one-week full pay and one week at statutory pay. A survey of new fathers (it should of course be remembered that a partner of a pregnant woman may not necessarily be male), conducted by Sergeant [REDACTED], found that financial considerations were the main driver for new fathers/partners not taking their full paternity entitlement, which caused many to feel guilty at not being there to support their partner:

*“I took two weeks paternity and had to save for a few months beforehand to factor in the SSP in the second week”*

*“I took my paternity for one week but my partner gave birth via C-Section, as such on my actual paternity leave I wasn’t able to see my child due to COVID restrictions, the time spent with my newly born child was due to my annual leave”*

*“My partner gave birth via C-Section, she wasn’t able to do much due to the recovery of that, having me there to help was great for us, however I had to use a lot of annual leave and rest days in lieu”*

*“I took one week, I was only due in work two shifts in the second week so would have lost a full –week’s pay although I was only due to be in work for two days, so I took annual leave for the two days instead”*

*“I took two weeks, I had to save well in advance to do this, it would have been nice to have been able to use this money I’d saved towards the costs of having a baby”*

*“It’s nice to see the force looking at assisting the fathers of children, it was nice to see the maternity pay increase to 6 months, hopefully as a father we can be treated in a similar way where things are improved”*

*“Implementing something like this would be unique to BTP, it would further push that BTP are a family force and care about their staff”*

*“I took one weeks paternity, due to not being able to financially afford to take 2 weeks, it would have been nice to have two weeks, I felt guilty leaving my partner to look after the child when she was still suffering from the after effects of giving birth, we had no family local to help us but we just had to manage”*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/index.aspx>

### **3. FINANCIAL, LEGAL & EQUALITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Miscarriage leave: Using the above data if 18 employees were to take one week's miscarriage leave this would cost an average of £16,763 pa. However, in most instances the employee will have previously taken compassionate or sick leave, so we believe this may be a neutral cost, but will enable people to declare their true reason for absence.
- 3.2 Paternity leave cost modelling shows:
- If we were to pay the second week of paternity leave at full pay (based on an average salary) it would cost £77,434 pa.
  - If we were to increase the paternity leave benefit to 3 weeks, it would cost an additional £154,868 pa.
  - However, financially this is a non-cash impact as extending the leave support, does not directly increase the payroll costs to BTP. The indirect cost impact however, will be the overtime / shift cover as required.
- 3.3 As a compassionate, family friendly organisation we want to offer benefits to support both parents. We believe these indirect costs will be absorbable within normal departmental and divisional budgets and are therefore deemed affordable.

### **4. ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The Female Police Association and their lead for Baby Loss have been consulted. A volunteer, Sergeant [REDACTED], conducted a survey of officers who had taken paternity leave, which contributed to shaping our thinking, for which we are grateful.
- 4.2 FEB fully support the proposal and prefer the option of offering three weeks Partner parental leave.

### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Offer 5 days paid pregnancy loss/miscarriage leave to parent employees.
- 5.2 Increase paternity leave to three weeks full pay. As this is beyond the Chief Constable delegation BTPA approval is required.
- 5.3 To take away the paternalistic connotations of 'paternity leave', we will rename this benefit as 'partner parental leave'