

# St Padarn's Institute Formation for Licensed Ministry Parental Leave Policy



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## 2. Introduction

While candidates for ministry are not employed by the Church, and therefore do not have employment rights, the Church has a moral responsibility to ensure that there are fair, non-discriminatory practices in place for their initial training. The Church wants to ensure it has good quality candidates of all ages, so it is also in the Church's interest

that there is provision in place for those planning on becoming parents, in order to remove a potential barrier to training. This policy describes the practices for those who become pregnant while in initial training. The policy is generally based on the principles of the Church in Wales Clergy Maternity Leave Policy<sup>1</sup>, however the financial provision differs as candidates receive a grant rather than a stipend.

### **3. Giving Notice of Pregnancy**

Candidates who are pregnant are encouraged to let the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training know as soon as possible. Maternity provision does not alter depending on circumstances. However, certain arrangements that need to be put in place in order to ensure a candidate can complete their training will be dependent on factors such as: how much maternity leave is taken, at what point in the year, and the academic programme a candidate is on.

Early communication means that arrangements for a maternity risk assessment can be undertaken at an early stage. Candidates are also encouraged to let their DDO know as soon as possible as maternity leave may affect length of training and licensing date and will allow the diocese to be able to support the candidate appropriately.

A pregnant candidate will need to provide a maternity certificate (MAT B1) to the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training. This can be obtained from a GP or midwife after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.

### **4. Maternity Leave**

Candidates who are pregnant will be able to take time off for pregnancy related medical appointments.

Candidates who give birth may take up to 52 weeks maternity leave.

A candidate can choose to begin their maternity leave from the 11<sup>th</sup> week prior to the due date. If the baby is born earlier than this then maternity leave will begin on the date of the birth of the child.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/clergy-handbook/maternity-leave-and-pay/>

A candidate should inform St Padarn's of when they intend to take maternity leave at least 15 weeks before the due date. A candidate can change their mind after this date, giving 28 days' notice.

Pregnant candidates may choose to continue training until as close to the expected week of childbirth as they wish provided, they are capable of taking a full part. If it is felt that the candidate's health or that of the unborn baby is suffering as a result of their continuing to work, then St Padarn's may require the candidate to be examined by the Occupational Health Doctor.

If the baby is born prematurely, a candidate should let the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training know as soon as is reasonably practicable and, provide a certificate MATB2 form which can be obtained from the GP or midwife.

While the above is framed in terms of your choices and obligations, we would encourage you to talk these things through openly with your personal tutor so that we help you think through the different options and support you in your decision making.

In the event that a candidate does not wish to return to training then the candidate should discuss this with the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training and their DDO. Candidates who do not return to training following maternity will not be required to pay back their grant.

Most candidates will be studying an accredited programme as part of their training (such as Theology for Life). A candidate who is pregnant is likely to need to apply for an interruption of studies from their academic work. The processes for this depend on the programme and so the candidate should contact Registry for more information on what they need to do. This is not something that happens automatically and while a candidate's academic programme will be discussed with the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training the candidate will need to follow the correct process for applying for an interruption of studies.

## **5. Grants during Maternity Leave**

### **5.1 Full-Time Candidates**

The Church in Wales makes financial provision for maternity in the form of grants.

Candidates who fall pregnant will continue to receive a training and housing grant for 39 weeks. The travel component will be removed, and on the birth of the child the grant will be reassessed to include the child grant. The grant will stop after 39 weeks of

maternity leave. If you wish you can take a further 13 weeks of maternity leave to bring it up to 52 weeks, although this will be unpaid.

Any costs for the academic component of training will continue to be met by St Padarn's, providing the candidate goes through the proper processes for interruption of studies.

## **5.2 Part-Time Candidates**

The purpose of the part-time grant is to cover incidental costs of training, and so no grant is paid during maternity leave.

Any costs for the academic component of training will continue to be met by St Padarn's, providing the candidate goes through the proper processes for interruption of studies.

## **5.3 Returning to Training**

No candidate can return to training during the first two weeks after giving birth.

Two weeks before the return from maternity leave the candidate will be invited to meet with the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training to talk through the transition back into training.

If a candidate decides to return to training before the end of their maternity leave, they must put in a request in writing at least 28 days before their expected return date to the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training. The Dean will assess the situation to see if this is advisable, before deciding. All decisions will be communicated directly to the candidate and in cases where it is not feasible for the candidate to return to training on their preferred date, explanations as to why they cannot return to their training on their chosen date will be fully explained.

## **5.4 Length of Training**

The type of training a candidate is undertaking is not affected by maternity. However, the FLM programme needs to be completed before a candidate is licensed for ministry and so the date of licensing may be affected. A candidate should know before they make a final decision about length of maternity leave what impact this will have on their length of training. A meeting between the candidate, their DDO and the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training should take place as soon as possible after the candidate has informed St Padarn's that they are pregnant. Their Bishop will need to authorise any subsequent change to length of training.

## **5.5 Contact during Maternity Leave**

It can be helpful for a candidate to be able to keep in touch during their maternity leave. If a candidate thinks it would be beneficial to them, they should discuss with the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training about attending occasional days of training. Candidates should feel free to contact their personal tutor occasionally to keep in touch during their leave. (At no time is a candidate obliged to keep in touch during their maternity leave.)

## **5.6 Stillbirth and Miscarriage**

It is sincerely hoped that all will go well with the pregnancy, but occasionally a pregnancy will sadly end in stillbirth or miscarriage. If this should happen candidates should contact their personal tutor at the earliest opportunity so that St Padarn's are able to arrange pastoral support. Compassionate leave will be arranged in line with the absence policy, throughout which period grants will continue.

Partners who have experienced stillbirth or miscarriage are also strongly encouraged to contact their personal tutor for support and to arrange a period of compassionate leave with them.

## **6. Paternity Leave**

A candidate whose partner gives birth can take 2 weeks paternity leave. Leave must be taken within 8 weeks of the birth of the child. This 2-week period would not have any impact on training progress unless an assignment deadline falls in that period. If this is the case the candidate should contact the Registrar. Candidates should notify the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training of the expected due date 4 weeks beforehand. Paternity leave must be taken in one go. Once the baby is born the candidate should notify the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training when they would like to take paternity leave as soon as possible.

## **7. Shared Parental Leave**

### **7.1 Where both partners are Candidates**

The candidate giving birth must take the two weeks after the birth of the baby as leave. There are a couple of alternatives for Shared Parental Leave where both parents are candidates:

- The candidates can choose which partner takes the whole of the remainder of the maternity leave. The candidates should notify The Dean for Initial Ministerial Training as soon as possible, and the Dean and their DDO will discuss implications and arrangements with whichever partner takes the maternity leave.
- The candidates may be able to take a proportion of the maternity leave each, either concurrently or consecutively. For example, they may each wish to take part of the leave together, or each take a period of time one after another. It is important to note that the 39 weeks of leave eligible for grants to be paid is in total across both partners, it is not 39 weeks each. The need to ensure that both partners are able to complete all aspects of their training may affect how flexible these arrangements can be. Candidates wishing to explore the possibility of shared parental leave should speak to the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training at the earliest possible opportunity so an assessment can be made on the impact of their training.

## **7.2 Where a candidate's employed partner gives birth**

If a candidate's partner is employed and chooses to return to work before the end of their maternity leave, the candidate may take parental leave. The candidate can take shared parental leave from 2 weeks after the birth of the child for the rest of the eligible period of leave, as described above, including the payment of the grant. The candidate should notify the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training of the expected due date as soon as possible and they and the candidate's DDO will discuss implications and arrangements with them.

Other than the 2 weeks paternity leave there is no further leave for a candidate whose partner is unemployed and gives birth.

## **8. Adoption Leave**

Adoption leave is broadly similar to other parental leave. Where there are two parents, one parent assumes the role of primary adopter. If a candidate assumes the role of primary adopter, they may start adoption leave when they have been matched with a child/children or 14 days before the fostering to adopt placement starts. It is recognised that the nature of adoption means that it is often not possible to give much notice to begin adoption leave. In order to help prepare for their leave, the candidate may find it helpful to talk to the Dean for Initial Ministerial Training when they get to the point where a match or a placement is likely to be imminent.

Once the primary adopter begins adoption leave, their leave follows the same principles as maternity leave, including grants.

Where the candidate is not the primary adopter, they are eligible for paternity leave (regardless of the sex of the parent, leave for the parent who is not the primary carer is still termed 'paternity'). The entitlement is 2 weeks leave, in the 8 weeks after they have been matched with a child/children or 14 days before the fostering to adopt placement starts.

Where both partners are candidates, one will assume the role of primary adopter, and be entitled to adoption leave and the other will be entitled to paternity leave.

Candidates who adopt are entitled to Shared Parental Leave.

## **9. Surrogacy**

If candidates are having a baby through surrogacy, then they will be treated the same as adoptive parents, with leave entitlement beginning at the point they become responsible for the child's/children's upbringing.

Any candidate exploring whether to be a surrogate during their training period should explore this at the earliest opportunity with their Bishop.

These arrangements can be complex, and candidates are encouraged to speak either with their personal tutor or the Director of Operations.