



Family Leave Policy Belgium

February 2026

Title:	Family Leave Policy		
Scope:	Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave Shared Parental leave Parental leave for those with children up to 18yrs old Emergency time off for dependents Compassionate leave Carer's leave Neonatal leave		
Owner:	Gill Johnson, COO		
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Changes:		Date of next review:	February 2027

Introduction

Opportunity Green was established to fight the climate crisis, but the climate is so intertwined with equity that you can't tackle one without also ensuring that you are doing what you can to tackle the other. We want to provide a supportive working environment for new parents, while doing our bit to tackle the gender pay gap within our budgetary constraints as a new organisation. As Opportunity Green grows, we commit to keeping this policy under review with a view to providing the best support we are able within our means and resources.

This is why our family leave policy applies equally whether you are a soon-to-be parent of a biological, surrogate or adopted child, and whether this is your first child, or you are adding to your family. We will support you before, during and after your parental leave to help you manage your transition into parenthood as smoothly as possible.

Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave

Your Statutory Rights

Maternity Leave

Total Leave: Maximum of 15 weeks (17 weeks for multiple births).

Prenatal Leave: a maximum of 6 weeks (maximum of 8 weeks in the case of multiple births). It is obligatory to take a minimum of 1 week before birth.

Postnatal Leave: Minimum of 9 weeks after childbirth.

Employees may choose to take up to 5 weeks (or 9 weeks in case of multiple births) of the prenatal leave after the birth if they did not use it all beforehand.

Employees must:

- Notify the People and Culture Manager and their line manager at least 7 weeks before the expected delivery date (preferably in writing / via email).
- Provide a medical certificate confirming the expected due date.
- Inform the organisation of their intended maternity leave dates.

For the initial 30 days of maternity leave, the employee is entitled to 82% of her gross salary, which is covered by ONSS (BE social security). After this period, social security continues to pay 75% of the gross salary, but this amount is capped at a certain limit. An employee needs to apply to their mutuelle to receive this payment.

Paternity / Co-Parent Leave

As a co-parent, you are entitled to 20 days of leave which need to be taken within the four months following the birth. In the case of the birth of twins or multiple births, the entitlement to the birth leave is recognised only once.

During the first three days of birth leave, the employee retains full pay at the employer's expense. After this period, social security continues to pay 82% of the gross salary (subject to a cap).

Adoption Leave

Employees are entitled to adoption leave of up to 6 weeks for children under 3 and 4 weeks for children aged 3-8. During this period, employees receive 82% of the adoptive parent's salary paid by the ONSS (BE Social Security). An employee needs to apply to her mutuelle to receive this payment.

Neonatal Care Leave

If a baby is born prematurely and must stay in neonatal care or if within 2 weeks of birth, the baby must return to and stay the hospital the birth parent's maternity leave will automatically be extended by the amount of time the baby has to stay in the hospital. Payment for this extended period is made by the ONSS through the employee's mutuelle. An employee needs to apply to her mutuelle to receive this payment.

Returning to work

Flexible return

Annual leave can be used to help you to transition back into work in a flexible way. For example, you may wish to return on two or three days a week for a few weeks while you and your child settle into your new routine. We would encourage you to speak to your manager about how else we can support you to return to work after such a momentous change in your life, including for example flexibility to attend nursery settling in sessions.

If you return to work and are still breastfeeding, room Wangari Mathay on the 4th floor of Norrsken House is available for breastfeeding mothers.

Onwards career management

Your line manager will be encouraged to work closely with you to ensure that you are supported before, during and after your leave, including frequent one to ones and setting onwards career objectives as we welcome you back to work.

Opportunity Green's Enhanced Family Leave

We recognise that having a child – whether it is your first child or you are adding to your family – can be a life-altering experience with several adjustments to make for you and your family. That is why, for employees who have been with Opportunity Green for at least 52 weeks by the end of the 'qualifying week' – the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, are entitled to enhanced benefits, in addition to the statutory rights above. Our policy is very generous and aims at giving equality, and flexibility, for both parents. We therefore ask that when you return from maternity, paternity or adoption leave (where you received our enhanced benefits) you stay with us for 12 months, and that if this is not the case or is not possible, we reserve the right to ask for the enhanced pay you received to be returned to us.

Enhanced Time off

Whether you are the birth mother, adoptive mother, father or partner we want you to have the opportunity to care for and spend time with your child. You might decide that it works for you and your family to get back to work more quickly after your child arrives, or you may wish to have another few months' leave when your child is a bit older.

Opportunity Green therefore offers:

- 12 months off for both the birth / main adoptive parent **and** the partner, with partial enhanced pay – see below.
- You can take your 12-month entitlement at any time within 24 months of the birth or adoption, splitting your leave across the 24 months if you prefer (subject to prior arrangement and any statutory requirements).
- It is a statutory right for fathers / partners to have 20 days leave. The timing of any leave over this amount needs to be agreed with your manager. **We strongly encourage all fathers / partners to take at least 3 months off within the first 12 months** and offer enhanced pay for this – see below.
- If you have a 2nd child born within the 24 months and the full 12 months of leave has not been taken, you will lose any outstanding balance at the start of your new leave period. You will also need to have been back at work for at least 3 months before the start of your next leave to qualify for enhanced pay.

Enhanced pay

Because we know how important future financial security is when you have a family, we:

- Offer 26 weeks fully paid family leave for all parents which starts from the day you go on maternity / parental / adoption leave (this includes the birth parent; main adoptive parent; partner of the birth parent / main adoptive parent).
- Will continue to pay your standard 8% pension contributions throughout your full family leave period, based on your usual salary.

Neonatal care leave and pay

We recognise that having your baby arrive unexpectedly early and requiring care on a neonatal ward is stressful and has long term impacts on your family. In keeping with our enhanced pay approach, Opportunity Green offers the following support to employees who qualify for enhanced family leave:

- The first six weeks are fully paid as neonatal care leave for all parents in addition to above enhanced pay and leave (this includes the birth parent; main adoptive parent; partner of the birth parent / main adoptive parent)

Parental Leave

Your Statutory Rights

Employees can take up to 4 months of parental leave within 12 years of a child's birth or adoption. Parental leave options include full-time, half-time, 1/5, and 1/10 work reductions, with benefits from the ONSS.

Other family-related leave

Your Statutory Rights

An employee may be absent from work, without loss of earnings or holiday entitlement, in the following circumstances.

Event	Number of days	Details
Marriage of the employee	2 days	
Marriage of an immediate family member	1 day	Parents, children, siblings, and grandchildren (+ steps and in-laws)
Death of a (step) child or spouse or cohabiting partner	10 days	
Death of another 1 st degree relative	5 days To be taken between the day of death and funeral	Parents, in-laws or stepparents
Death of another family member living under the same roof	2 days To be taken between the day of death and funeral	(Great-)grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, (great-)grandparents (+ steps and in-laws)
Death of another family member (up to third-degree relative in direct line)	1 day Day of the funeral	(Great-)grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, (great-)grandparents (+ steps and in-laws)
Solemn Communion of a child of the worker or his/her spouse or cohabiting partner	the day of the ceremony (if it falls on a Sunday, a public holiday or a usual day of inactivity: the usual day of activity following or preceding the event)	

Fertility treatment

We understand that going through fertility challenges is difficult. Receiving and recovering from the physical and psychological effects of fertility treatment takes time. We want to ensure that anyone struggling with fertility challenges has the time and support to manage this alongside their work. If you need time off for anything related to your or your partner's fertility treatment, speak to your line manager as soon as you can to make a plan for the time you need. We would encourage you to let your line manager know so that they can support you during this time, however if you would prefer not to tell anyone you are able to take sickness absence / planned medical leave instead to cover these absences.

We understand that treatment can involve appointments at short notice. Please work with your line manager when planning for these and keep them updated on any changes. Opportunity Green offers flexible working arrangements, and you can request time off for your appointments and treatments without a loss of pay in line with our other policies. Fertility treatment that requires a full day of absence or longer is counted as planned medical leave under our Sickness Absence Management policy. This also applies if it is your partner who is undergoing fertility treatment; you will be entitled to the same amount of paid time off to attend these appointments with them.

If you are sick due to receiving fertility treatment, you are entitled to time off work to recover, and the usual sickness absence pay. We strongly encourage you to take time off when you need to. Please follow the processes set out in our Sickness Absence Management policy.

If you think that you would benefit from some reasonable adjustments or temporary changes to your work, please speak to your line manager and the People and Culture Manager, so that we can work out how to best support you.

Pregnancy loss leave

We understand that pregnancy loss can be a devastating experience, no matter how early on in pregnancy a miscarriage occurs and whether it happens to you, your partner or the surrogate having your baby. Sadly, there is no statutory support available for early pregnancy loss at the moment in the UK, but OG recognises that people will need support at this time and therefore offers the following enhanced paid leave as set out below.

If you are reading this because you have been affected, we are sorry for your loss. We do not assume to know how much leave you might need if this has happened to you. This Policy is not about creating a one-size fits all approach. It highlights the different ways that we can support you. Please speak to your line manager and / or People and Culture Manager so they can support you to make a plan for any time off work and return to work when the time is right for you.

Loss prior to 24 weeks

Anyone affected by pregnancy loss prior to 180 days of pregnancy, including partners and those affected by loss through fertility treatment from the point of embryo transfer, will be eligible for two weeks of paid leave. We would encourage you to let your line manager know so that they can support you during this difficult time and help you return to work. However, if you would prefer not to tell anyone you are able to take sickness absence instead.

Loss from 24 weeks onwards

The law and your rights are different if you are affected by pregnancy loss from 180 days onwards, your baby is stillborn or dies shortly after birth. You are entitled to your full statutory benefits in those circumstances. You will be eligible for enhanced pay from Opportunity Green for the first two months following your loss.

Return to work

However, we recognise that for some people, dealing with such loss can be helped by returning to work and we will support your return to work in a way that best meets your needs at the time, including flexible hours or reduced working day.

We know that if you are affected by pregnancy loss you may also need time away from work to attend medical appointments or to support your partner at these, and that it may be challenging to arrange these. Please keep your line manager informed if you are back at work from pregnancy loss leave and need to attend any appointments related to it. You will be able to take the time off needed for these.

Redundancy protections around pregnancy and family leave

Employees who are pregnant or taking family leave are entitled to redundancy protection.

Employees are protected from being made redundant from the moment they inform their employer about their pregnancy up until one month after the end of maternity leave. Employees on parental leave are also protected from termination up until one month after the end of any parental leave period.

Emergency time off for Dependants

As an employer we want to ensure that you are able to deal with any emergency involving a dependant that might come up. A dependant could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on you for care.

Please talk to your line manager / the People and Culture Manager if something comes up that you need to deal with right away, and we will work with you to ensure we agree reasonable time off. Note that emergency time off for dependants does not cover situations you know about in advance, such as pre-booked hospital appointments. Talk to us about these too as you might be able to take parental leave or work out another arrangement with your line manager / the People and Culture Manager.

Carer's leave

Your Statutory Rights

Palliative Care Leave – Employees can take up to 3 months of leave to care for a terminally ill family member, with the option to extend. A doctor's certificate is required. It can be issued up to 3 certificates for the same person. Request are done for 1 month at a time to the ONEM.

Medical Assistance Leave – Employees can take a full or partial career break of at least 1 month (but up to 3 months) to care for a seriously ill family member.

An employee who is in need of one of these options should reach out to the People and Culture Manager to discuss their needs.

Opportunity Green's Enhanced Compassionate Leave

Our compassionate leave aims to allow our employees the time off they need following the loss of a loved one – usually a parent, partner, child, sibling or grandparent – but it could also be someone else who was close. We know that everyone will be affected by these situations differently, and that people will grieve in different ways and so we want you have the space and time needed to ensure your wellbeing.

Opportunity Green offers 10 days of paid compassionate leave when you lose a spouse or child, and up to two weeks (8 days) when you lose any other loved one. This does not have to be taken consecutively and

can be used in half day blocks – for example to make arrangements for a funeral. You will need to speak to your line manager/ People and Culture Manager as soon as possible to be clear what time off you might need, both for practical matters but also your own emotional wellbeing, but we recognise that time off might also be needed at short notice in such situations.

If you feel you need more than two weeks off, please be open with your line manager / People and Culture Manager as there will be further options, including unpaid leave, that can be considered to support you.

Related Policies

- Sickness absence management
- 4-day week
- Annual leave