

# Family-friendly benefits for our people





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**Please note:**  
L&Q policies may be subject to change at any time with or without notice. Always check the staff handbook for full details.

## Introduction

L&Q is committed to work-life balance and recognises the changing demands of family life. Whether due to the arrival of a new born, a parent needing care or a child starting school, finding the right balance between work and home life can benefit both employee and employer.

The bottom line is that L&Q is striving to be the housing employer of choice for talented and ambitious people.

We know that this can only be achieved if we can provide the type of working environment and benefits package that attracts and retains the best people in the business.

To this end, we have developed a number of family-friendly schemes to benefit our employees. This booklet explains the different schemes available.

Our family friendly policies apply to all employees regardless of the gender of the employee's partner and include same gender or non-heterosexual couples.



## Benefits A-K

### A Maternity leave

L&Q offers maternity leave and pay arrangements far in advance of the statutory requirements. All pregnant employees are entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave.

Actual arrangements are dependent on service and the following sets out the arrangements applicable:

- **0 to 26 weeks' service**

Employees with this length of service will not benefit from statutory maternity pay but may be able to claim statutory maternity allowance for up to 39 weeks from their local Jobcentre Plus office.

- **26 weeks' to 12 months' service**

With this level of service employees will receive statutory maternity pay (SMP) for six weeks at the higher rate which is 9/10ths of their salary (based on the average salary paid over the eight weeks prior to starting maternity leave). This is followed by 33 weeks at standard rate of SMP.

- **12 months' service**

Employees will benefit from 18 weeks' leave on full pay and 21 weeks' SMP. Employees with more than 12 months' service at end of the 15th week before the week the baby is due will also benefit from the option to take 52 weeks' extended leave, taking the whole maternity leave period up to two years.

When employees want to return to work (between 52 and 104 weeks), L&Q will find a post that is as far as possible comparable with the previous post. This will be on terms and conditions of employment which are not less favourable than those when maternity leave began.



## **B** Paternity leave

L&Q recognises the important role that partners of new mothers play during pregnancy and the early stages of their new baby's life.

L&Q encourages staff to take time off at this very important time. In addition to the generous leave entitlement, we provide an additional two weeks' paid leave for husbands and partners (with a minimum of 26 weeks' service with L&Q) of pregnant employees.

The leave must be taken within the period from three weeks before and three weeks after the birth. Ordinary paternity leave applies to employees regardless of the gender of the employee's partner and includes same gender or non-heterosexual couples.

## **C** Adoption leave – 26 weeks' service

If an employee is adopting a child, time off to make all the arrangements will be given in the same way as for antenatal care.

When the adoption has taken place, time off and pay arrangements will be granted in line with the maternity leave arrangements for the primary carer. If the employee is not the primary carer, they will be granted time off in line with the paternity leave arrangements.



## **D** Leave for infertility treatment

Time off for infertility treatment will be given in the same way as for antenatal care.

This leave applies to employees regardless of the gender of the employee's partner and includes same gender or non-heterosexual couples.

## **E** Parental leave

Parental leave allows time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for a child's welfare. Employees can use it to spend more time with their children and strike a balance between work and family commitments.

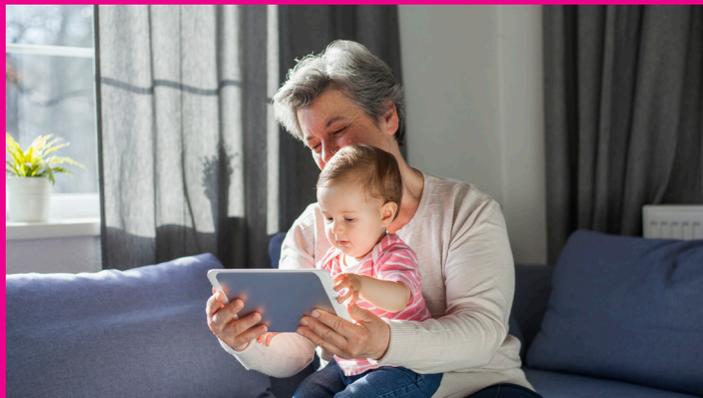
If an employee is a parent with at least one year's service, they will be eligible for up to 13 weeks' unpaid leave for each child, spread over a five-year period (pro-rata for part-time staff).

Parental leave applies to employees regardless of the gender of the employee's partner and includes same gender or non-heterosexual couples.

## **F** Grandparent leave

As well as recognising the role that partners play during the early stages of a new baby's life, we also know that many grandparents need to provide support to their children. This includes helping with their new born grandchild.

To assist staff at this time, L&Q provides 2 days' paid grandparent leave for staff (with a minimum of 26 weeks' service with L&Q). The leave must be taken within the period from three weeks before and eight weeks after the birth.



## **G** Carer's leave

If employees need to look after a dependent in an emergency situation they may be allowed additional paid leave to do so.

This will be up to five days' paid leave.

Please refer to the staff handbook for details.

## **H** Carer expenses

L&Q will reimburse the cost of carer expenses for a dependent if an employee is required to:

- Work outside their normal hours
- Attend an evening meeting
- Attend a course, outside their normal working hours.

## **I** Flexible working

If you are a parent of a young or disabled child or a carer for an adult in need of care and have at least six months' service, you may request flexible working arrangements. Examples of this include a request to change working hours, part-time working or job-sharing. Please refer to the staff handbook on the intranet for the full policy. This policy applies to employees regardless of the gender of the employee's partner and includes same gender or non-heterosexual couples.



## J Career breaks

A career break allows employees to take up 12 months' unpaid leave to pursue work or non-work related interests. It can be used to spend more time studying to further their career, trial a totally different career, travel or spend more time with family.

### Eligibility

Employees will be eligible if they have at least five years' continuous service, at the date of request. Please note this will be classed as unpaid leave.

This will, of course, be open to full-time and part-time employees. When they return to work at the end of the career break, employees are guaranteed to return to their previous job. L&Q will ask for written confirmation of their intention to return one month before their return date.

## K Childcare Plus

Childcare Plus is a government-approved employee benefit. It saves employees money by allowing them to receive part of their salary free of tax and National Insurance to pay for registered or approved childcare.

A working parent with children under the age of 15 (or 16 if they are disabled) may be eligible to request to take part of their salary free of tax and National Insurance. If you are a basic rate taxpayer, you can save as much as £933 per parent, per year. For higher rate tax payers, you can make savings of up to £624 per parent, per year.

### To qualify you must:

- Use a childcare provider who is registered or approved through Ofsted or another recognised body
- Be paying for childcare for children under the age of 15 (or 16 if disabled). This includes nurseries, childminders, registered nannies, out-of-school clubs and holiday-pay schemes.

Childcare Plus is a recognised payment method of childcare and is accepted by most registered childcare providers across the UK

### You will benefit from:

- Reduced tax and National Insurance contributions
- Childcare Plus can be used to pay for the following forms of registered childcare: day nurseries, childminders, before- and after-school clubs, summer camps and any government-registered holiday clubs
- Statements can be viewed and payments made via the internet at any time
- Ad-hoc payments can be made to childcare providers or regular repeat payments can be set up
- Within 24 hours of requesting payments Childcare Plus will transfer the requested payment into your childcare provider's bank account (subject to available funds).

To apply, please call: **0800 161 3042** or please visit the Lifestyle website: **[www.landqgroupplifestyle.co.uk](http://www.landqgroupplifestyle.co.uk)** and enter the unique reference code: **mylifestyle**.





**For more information**

L&Q Group

T: 0300 456 9998

[www.lqgroup.org.uk](http://www.lqgroup.org.uk)

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