

New University of York staff adoption policies

University introduces new adoption leave pay scheme

By [Leah Huws](#), Deputy Food & Drink Editor (2015/16)

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Image: Matt Batchelor

The University of York has revealed it will be introducing a new adoption leave and pay policy in order to support members of staff considering adopting a child. The changes were announced on 22 October, which coincided with National Adoption Week.

The new policy grants staff the right to claim up to two days of paid leave to explore an adoption application. Members of staff will have the option of these two days in addition to the leave already guaranteed by official legislation surrounding the adoption process.

Currently, employees taking adoption leave are guaranteed paid leave of up to 39 weeks and unpaid leave of up to 13 weeks for employees.

Dr David Duncan, University Registrar and Secretary, said: "The University is keen to support members of staff who are wishing to adopt and to help working parents balance work and family life by offering flexibility in providing care for their children."

Between March 2014 and March 2015, 5,330 children were adopted from care in England. The UK currently has one of the lowest rates of adoption in Europe (source www.baaf.org).

Dr Duncan acknowledged the need to do more to encourage adoption, stating: "As an employer, we recognised that we could do more to support members of staff who are considering adopting a child. We hope that this enhanced leave and pay package will result in more staff pursuing adoption."

National Adoption Week has been running for 10 years in the hope of raising awareness of the adoption process. This year's theme was 'Too old at 4?' which showcased the difficulty of placing older children with adoptive families. The over 4s group, as well as sibling groups and BME children are among the children who wait longest to be adopted.

Responding to the University's decision, Hugh Thornbery, Chief Executive of Adoption UK, said: "Adoption UK is pleased when employers recognise the needs of adopters in what can be a long and complicated process.

"It's great that they offer to support them in their endeavour to provide a loving, stable, forever family to

children who can no longer live with their birth families.”

However, pay changes at the University aren't all so positive, as it was revealed some porters are facing having their annual salaries reduced by £5000.

The University currently employs 50 porters, who are responsible for both manning college reception desks and monitoring accommodation. Many face a salary fall from £25,700 to around £20,000, with the exception of 14 porters who work night shifts who may see their salaries rise to around £29,000.

When the news first surfaced in July, a University spokesman said: “The University is reviewing a number of services it offers in light of the changing nature of higher education. To this end, a working group was established to look at the portering and reception services...The group made a series of recommendations which the University is now looking to implement.”

The University has subsequently launched a staff consultation to discuss the recommendations, and has confirmed that it does not intend to implement any changes before the end of the year.

One porter told Nouse: “I have been working here for a long time and I'm approaching retirement – this pay cut will seriously damage my pension. It's a disgrace. It means we will have to budget and we won't be able to do the things we've been working towards all our lives, some of us.”



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