

ADOPTION LEAVE GUIDANCE

A Resource from Mother's Choice



WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Building a family takes love and commitment, and parents may choose to adopt for many different reasons. Adoption is a wonderful and equally valid way to build a family.

Adoption is the legal transfer of parental rights and responsibilities to the adoptive parents. Adopted children are entitled to the same rights as any biological children in the family.

WHAT IS ADOPTION LEAVE?

Adoption Leave is parental leave for mothers and fathers for a period after their adoptive child is placed in their home. Unlike maternity and paternity leave, Hong Kong has no statutory adoption leave.

This can leave employees who adopt in a vulnerable position as they may not be granted the same benefits and support as their peers who have a child through birth. Therefore, to cover this gap, employers can make specific provisions to include adoption leave within their company policies.

WHY IS ADOPTION LEAVE IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Families who choose to adopt children face a number of challenges in their journey to build their family through adoption, and the support of their employer can make an immense difference in their experience of parenthood.

Children waiting for adoption have complex family backgrounds and are unable to be cared for by their birth family. All adopted infants and children will have experiences of separation, loss, instability, and trauma, and will grieve their former caregivers, even as they join their new loving, forever family. These children need extended time to build trust with their new mothers and fathers to form healthy attachments for their future.

Parents need time to be available to show their child how they will love and care for them. For some parents, this will be their first experience of parenthood – suddenly there is a lot to learn and process emotionally. Parents feel less stressed knowing that they have the support of their employers and the understanding of their teams. This enables them to solely focus on learning how to care for and love their new child, and helping their child feel safe in their new home.



"Leaders across all sectors are becoming increasingly aware that adoption leave policies are a way for companies to have life-long impact on the community in Hong Kong"

Alia Eyres, CEO, Mother's Choice

HOW DOES THE ADOPTION PROCESS WORK?

Adoptions in Hong Kong are overseen by the Social Welfare Department. An employee hoping to adopt will go through the following adoption process:

- 1 APPLICATION**

The application process is 9-12 months and your employee will need to show they have supportive and stable employment as part of their suitability assessment. They may need flexibility in their work day to attend interviews and trainings.
- 2 WAITING**

Your employee can officially inform you of their adoption approval and will begin waiting to be matched with a child. This can take a short or long period of time depending on the families and children.
- 3 MATCHING**

Your employee will be able to inform you of the good news that they are matched with a child! Depending on the age of the child, they will have a 2 to 8 week transition to meet and visit the child before bringing them home.
- 4 ADOPTION LEAVE**

Your employee will welcome the child home and will need to focus on bonding with them. They will receive a letter from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) which gives authority to care for the child, while the SWD remains the legal guardian.
- 5 HOME VISITS**

For around 6 months, the family will be visited by the Social Welfare Department to see how the child is settling and how the family is doing.
- 6 ADOPTION FINALIZATION**

The adoption will be legally finalized by the court. Your employee is now legally their child's parent. This means the child will be able to access any health insurance or educational benefits included within your employee's contract.

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“As the definition and gender composition of families evolve over time, companies may choose to redefine their policies to ensure inclusivity. To attract and retain skilled global talent, and manage a diverse global workforce” – **Mercer's 2016 Global Parental Leave Report.**

WHY DO EMPLOYERS OFFER ADOPTION BENEFITS?

- Many countries around the world have statutory paid and unpaid Adoption Leave policies, including Singapore (3 months), Australia (12 months), UK (12 months), Japan (12 months), Sweden (18 months).
- They are low-cost benefits generally used by less than 1% of eligible employees.
- They increase employee loyalty, retention, and productivity, which lay a foundation for business growth.
- For the competitive edge in recruiting new employees.
- To enhance a company's family-friendly and social impact image.
- To validate adoptive parents as equal parents and reduce stigma on adoption in the community.
- To give employees time to bond with their children.
- To help move children from residential care to safe, loving, and permanent adoptive homes.

BUILDING AND PROMOTING ADOPTION LEAVE POLICIES

What are the next steps for my company to take?

1. Build a clear adoption leave policy that recognizes adoptive parenthood as equal to biological parenthood.
2. Include provision for paid leave and unpaid leave, as well as flexibility in leave options, work schedules, and working from home.
3. Include both fathers and mothers as part of the policy, recognizing that children need time to bond with both parents, and include every child who is adopted, regardless of their age.
4. Promote adoption leave policies internally so that employees fully understand their benefits and support from their employer.
5. Publicly launch your adoption leave policy to demonstrate your company's commitment to vulnerable children in the community.

Further Resources

- [Mother's Choice - Adoption-Friendly Workplaces](#)
- [Mother's Choice Local Adoption Guide](#)
- [Hong Kong Social Welfare Department Adoption Unit](#)
- [Hong Kong Family Friendly Employment Practices](#)
- [Top 100 "Adoption-Friendly Workplaces"](#)

Don't forget to **Celebrate** and **Congratulate** your employee on their adoption and their commitment to being a safe, loving, and permanent family for their child.

Mother's Choice is a local Hong Kong organization serving children without families and pregnant teenagers. Our vision is to see every child in a loving family. We are an accredited Adoption Services Provider of the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department Adoption Unit. Mother's Choice has been providing adoption services for over 30 years to prepare, assess, equip, and empower families to provide a loving, stable and permanent home where children can thrive, and we support families after their adoption.

領養假指引

來自「母親的抉擇」資源庫



甚麼是領養？

建立家庭需要愛和奉獻，父母可能出於許多不同的原因選擇領養。領養是建立家庭的一種奇妙且同樣有效的方法。

領養是將父母的權利和責任合法轉移給養父母。被領養的兒童享有與家庭中任何親生子女一樣的權利。

領養假是什麼？

領養假是父母將其領養的孩子安置在家裡後的一段育兒假期。與產假和陪產假不同，香港沒有法定的領養假。

這可能會使領養的僱員處於弱勢地位，因為他們可能無法獲得透過自己生育孩子的其他同事享有同等的福利和支持。因此，為了彌補這一差距，僱主可以制定具體規範，在其公司政策中納入領養假。

為甚麼領養假對兒童和家庭來說十分重要？

選擇領養孩子的家庭在透過領養建立家庭的過程中面臨許多挑戰，而僱主的支持可以極大地改變他們為父母的體驗。

等待領養的孩子有複雜的家庭背景，無法由其原生家庭照顧。所有領養的嬰兒和兒童都曾經歷分離、失去、不穩定和遭受創傷的經歷，並且即使他們加入新的、充滿愛心的永久家庭，孩子會對失去或離開前照顧者而感到悲傷失落。這些孩子需要更長的時間來與新父母們建立信任，以建立對彼此未來的健康依附。

父母需要時間來向孩子展示他們將如何愛護和照顧他們。對於某些父母來說，這將是他們第一次成為父母的經歷——突然之間，有很多需要學習和情感上處理的東西。父母知道自己得到僱主的支持和團隊的理解，因此他們的壓力就輕減了。這使他們能夠完全專注於學習如何照料和愛護他們的新孩子，並幫助他們的孩子在新的家庭中感到安全。



" 各行各業的領導人日漸意識到，領養假政策是公司對香港社會產生終身影響的一種方式。 "

艾利雅，「母親的抉擇」行政總裁

領養程序如何運作？

香港的領養工作由香港社會福利署負責。希望領養的員工將經歷以下領養程序：

1 申請

申請過程為9到12個月，您的員工需要在適合性評估中證明他們有支援而穩定的工作。他們可能需要彈性的工作日來參加面談和培訓。

2 等待中

您的員工可以正式通知您他們的領養批准，並將開始等待與孩子配對。根據家庭和兒童的不同情況，這可能需要或短或長的時間。

3 配對

您的員工將能夠告知您他們與孩子配對的好消息！根據孩子的年齡，他們需要2到8週的過渡期才能見面並探望孩子，然後再帶他們回家。

4 領養假

您的員工將歡迎孩子回家，並需要專注於與孩子建立羈絆。他們將收到香港社會福利署的來信，該信賦予他們照料孩子的權利，而社署仍然是法定監護人。

5 家訪

在大約6個月的時間裡，香港社會福利署將探訪該家庭，以了解孩子的生活狀況和家庭狀況。

6 領養定案

領養將由法院合法定案。您的員工現在是他們孩子的法定父母。這意味著孩子將能夠獲得員工的僱員合約中包含的任何健康保險或教育福利。

領養假指引

來自「母親的抉擇」資源庫



" 隨著家庭的定義和性別構成的變化，公司可能會選擇重新定義他們的政策以確保其包容性。吸引和留住熟練的全球人才，並管理多元化的全球勞動力。 " — Mercer 2016年全球育兒假報告

為何員工僱主會提供領養福利？

- 世界上許多國家都有法定的帶薪和無薪領養假政策，包括新加坡（3個月）、澳洲（12個月）、英國（12個月）、日本（12個月）、瑞典（18個月）。
- 它們是低成本的福利，通常只有不到1%的符合資格員工使用。
- 它們提高了員工的忠誠度、留任率和生產率，這為業務增長奠定了基礎。
- 在招聘新員工方面具有競爭優勢。
- 增強公司的家庭友善和社會影響力形象。
- 確認領養父母與父母同等，並減少社會對領養的謬誤。
- 給員工時間與孩子建立羈絆。
- 幫助將兒童從寄養住處轉移到安全、有愛心和永久領養家庭中。

建立和推廣領養假政策

我的公司下一步應該做些甚麼？

1. 制定明確的領養假政策，承認領養父母等同於親生母。
2. 提供帶薪假期和無薪假期，以及靈活的請假選項、工作時間和在家工作。
3. 在政策中包括父母雙方，並認識到孩子需要時間與父母雙方建立羈絆，其中包括所有被領養的孩子，不論其年齡多大。
4. 在公司內部推廣領養假政策，以便員工充分了解自己的福利和雇主的支持。
5. 公開發布您的領養假政策，以證明您的公司對社區中弱勢兒童的承諾。

更多資源

- 「母親的抉擇」 - 領養友好的工作場所
- 「母親的抉擇」香港領養指南
- 社會福利署領養課
- 香港家庭友善僱傭措施
- 百大最支持領養職場

別忘了慶祝和恭喜您的員工領養並承諾為孩子建立一個安全、關愛和永久的家庭。

「母親的抉擇」是一間本地慈善團體，服務香港眾多沒有家庭的孩子和意外懷孕少女。我們的遠景是每個孩子都擁有一個關愛的家。我們是香港社會福利署領養課認可的領養服務提供商。「母親的抉擇」已經提供領養服務超過30年，以準備、評估、裝備和賦能予家庭力量去提供一個關愛、穩固和永久的家庭，讓孩子們能夠壯成長，而我們在領養後仍為家庭提供支持。