

**27. Maternity Policy**

Female employees expecting to give birth are automatically entitled to a total of 52 week’s **maternity leave**, comprising 26 weeks’ **Ordinary Maternity Leave** and 26 weeks’ **Additional Maternity Leave**. There is no longer a qualifying period of work to be entitled to AML. You will be paid 90% of your salary before tax for the first 6 weeks. Further details can be found of gov.uk webiste

A pregnant employee whose baby is due to be born on or after 1 April 2007 has the rights to ordinary maternity leave (normally paid leave) and additional maternity leave. At the end of her ordinary maternity leave, she is entitled to return to her original job. At the end of her additional leave, she should still be able to return to her original job, but if this is not reasonably practicable, to a suitable alternative job.

During maternity leave, she may work and be paid as usual for up to 10 'Keeping in Touch days'.

To qualify for maternity leave, you must tell her employer by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth:

* that you are pregnant
* the expected week of childbirth, by means of a medical certificate if requested
* the date you intend to start maternity leave. This can normally be any date which is no earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth up to the birth.

Your employer must then write to you within 28 days of her notification, setting out your return date. You can change this date if you give your employer 'eight weeks' notice.

If a child is still born, after 24 weeks, maternity rights apply.

You can get Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks, as long as you meet the conditions.

To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you must have been:

* employed by the same employer continuously (some breaks do not interrupt continuous employment) for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the week your baby is due; and
* earning an average of at least £90 a week (before tax)

You can start your leave any time from 11 weeks before the beginning of the week when your baby's due. If you're off work because of your pregnancy in the four weeks before the expected birth date, your employer can make you start your maternity leave.

While you're on ordinary maternity leave, you keep your normal employment rights and benefits (apart from wages)

Employees whose baby is due or who adopt a child on or after 5 April 2015 may be entitled to take shared parental leave

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) offers free, confidential and impartial advice on all employment rights issues. You can call the Acas helpline on 08457 47 47 47 from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday.

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