

Maternity Leave Confirmation Letter

Letter · UK · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A maternity leave confirmation letter is the employer's written reply to an employee's maternity leave notice — confirming the date their leave will start, the date it will end, their expected return date, and where they stand on statutory maternity pay. UK employers must send this confirmation in writing within 28 days of receiving the employee's notice.

The letter matters more than its length suggests. The dates it states are the ones both sides rely on for the next year — payroll builds the pay schedule around them, the manager plans cover around them, and if the return date is ever disputed, this letter is the document everyone reaches for. Skipping it, or doing it by corridor conversation, is how return-date arguments start.

This template gives you the full letter ready to edit, with alternative paragraphs for employees who do and do not qualify for statutory maternity pay, plus what to check before sending and how to keep the records straight.

When to use this letter

Send this letter after an employee has formally told you the week their baby is due and the date they want their maternity leave to start — notice they must give by the statutory deadline, around the 15th week before the baby is expected; the exact rules are on GOV.UK. The notice is usually supported by the MATB1 maternity certificate from a midwife or doctor.

From the day you receive that notice, you have 28 days to confirm the leave start and end dates in writing. This letter discharges that duty, and it is also the natural place to confirm the maternity pay position, mention keeping-in-touch days, and say who to contact — one letter, everything in writing.

What to check before you send it

- The notice itself: has the employee given you the due-date week and their intended start date? If anything is missing or unclear, resolve it in conversation first — the letter should confirm agreed facts, not guesses.
- The MATB1 certificate: midwives and doctors usually issue it around 20 weeks before the due date, and payroll needs it for statutory maternity pay. Do not hold the confirmation letter hostage to it — the 28-day clock is running — chase it separately.
- The dates: the earliest leave can start, and the short period of leave that is compulsory immediately after the birth, are set by rules on GOV.UK. Unless the employee has said otherwise, the end date is the end of the 52 weeks of statutory maternity leave.
- The pay decision: payroll checks statutory maternity pay eligibility and either confirms it (current rates on GOV.UK) or prepares form SMP1 — the letter reads very differently depending on the answer, so decide before drafting.
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Any enhanced maternity pay under your maternity leave policy, including qualifying service and repayment conditions — the employee should see those terms in writing now, not discover them later.

The letter template

[On [Your company] letterhead]

[Date]

Dear [employee name],

Re: Confirmation of your maternity leave

Thank you for your notice of [date of notice] telling us that your baby is due in the week beginning [expected week of childbirth] and that you would like your maternity leave to start on [leave start date]. [Thank you also for your MATB1 certificate, which we have passed to payroll. / We still need your MATB1 maternity certificate — please pass it to [name/role] once your midwife or doctor issues it.]

I am writing to confirm your maternity leave dates, as we are required to do. Your maternity leave will start on [leave start date]. You are entitled to up to 52 weeks' statutory maternity leave, so unless you tell us otherwise your leave will end on [leave end date] and we will expect you back at work on [first working day after the leave end date].

If you would like to return to work earlier than that, you need to give us at least [number] weeks' notice of your new return date — the current statutory minimum is on GOV.UK. If your baby arrives early, or you want to change your leave start date, the statutory notice rules on GOV.UK apply — tell [name/role] as soon as you can and we will confirm the revised dates in writing.

[If the employee qualifies for statutory maternity pay:] Our records show that you qualify for statutory maternity pay (SMP), which is payable for up to 39 weeks at the rates set by government — the current figures are on GOV.UK, and [name/role in payroll] will confirm the amounts and payment dates with your first payment. [If [Your company] pays enhanced maternity pay, set out the amount, duration, and any repayment condition here; otherwise delete this sentence.]

[If the employee does not qualify for statutory maternity pay:] Having checked the eligibility conditions, I am sorry to say you do not qualify for statutory maternity pay because [reason]. The enclosed form SMP1 explains this. You may be able to claim Maternity Allowance instead — GOV.UK explains how to apply, and you will usually need the SMP1 for that claim. Your maternity leave itself is not affected.

While you are on leave you can, by agreement, work a limited number of keeping-in-touch (KIT) days without bringing your leave or statutory pay to an end — the current maximum is on GOV.UK. KIT days are entirely voluntary for both of us; nearer the time, [name/role] will ask whether you would like to use any. We have agreed to keep in touch by [agreed contact method and frequency], and we will tell you about any significant changes at work, including vacancies and anything affecting your role.

Your other terms and conditions continue during your leave, and your annual leave keeps accruing. If anything in this letter does not match your understanding, or your plans change, please contact [name/role] on [contact details].

We wish you all the very best, and we look forward to welcoming you back.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job title], [Your company]

If the employee does not qualify for SMP

Statutory maternity pay has earnings and service conditions that statutory maternity leave does not, so an employee can qualify for the full 52 weeks of leave but not for SMP. If that is the position, you must tell the employee why using form SMP1 — the employer guide on GOV.UK covers the form and the deadline for giving it.

Enclose the SMP1 with this letter, use the not-eligible pay paragraph, and keep the tone factual and kind — this is unwelcome news arriving in an official envelope. Signpost Maternity Allowance so the employee knows there may be another route to payment, and make clear that their leave dates and everything else in the letter stand unchanged.

Delivery and record-keeping

- Send the letter within 28 days of receiving the employee's notice — the deadline is statutory, not a courtesy. Letter or email both count as writing; Acas recommends a written reply precisely so nobody argues later about what was agreed.
- Copy payroll and the employee's line manager so the pay schedule and cover planning start from the same dates.
- File the letter with the employee's notice, the MATB1, and any SMP1 in [system/location], in line with your data retention policy.
- Diary the expected return date and the notice windows for changes. If the baby arrives early or the employee changes their dates, confirm the revised dates in writing again — a fresh letter, not a reply-all.

How to use this template

1. Work out the dates first — the leave start date from the employee's notice, the end of the 52 weeks, and the first working day back — and have payroll sense-check them.
2. Confirm the SMP position with payroll before drafting: the eligible and not-eligible versions of the letter are different, and sending the wrong one causes real distress.
3. Keep the paragraph that matches the pay position and delete the alternative, then check the current notice period for changing a return date on GOV.UK and fill in the [number].
4. Send the letter within 28 days of the employee's notice, and copy payroll and the line manager.
5. File everything together — notice, MATB1, letter, any SMP1 — and diary the return date.
6. If dates change later, send a fresh confirmation letter rather than relying on a conversation.

Official guidance

- › [GOV.UK — Statutory Maternity Pay and Leave: employer guide](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Maternity pay and leave](#)
- › [Acas — Managing your employee's maternity leave and pay](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/maternity-leave-confirmation-letter-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.