

Maternity Leave Policy

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-11 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A maternity leave policy is the written statement of how your organisation supports employees through pregnancy, maternity leave, and the return to work — how they tell you they are pregnant, what leave and pay they can take, how you stay in touch while they are away, and how their return is handled.

Maternity is one of the areas of people management where getting the process wrong is both easy and expensive. Missed risk assessments, clumsy contact during leave, and mishandled returns are the classic sources of pregnancy and maternity discrimination claims. A clear written policy keeps managers consistent and gives employees certainty at exactly the time they need it.

This template gives you a complete, ready-to-edit policy: notification and antenatal care, leave and pay, health and safety during pregnancy, keeping-in-touch arrangements, and the return-to-work process.

Purpose and scope

This policy explains how [Your company] manages maternity leave, maternity pay, and the rights that go with them. It applies to all pregnant employees regardless of length of service, and to every manager who handles a maternity matter.

It should be read alongside our shared parental leave, flexible working, and annual leave policies, because employees often use these rights together.

Policy statement

[Your company] supports employees through pregnancy, maternity leave, and their return to work. No one will be treated unfavourably because they are pregnant, on maternity leave, or have recently returned from it — this applies to pay, promotion, training, work allocation, and redundancy decisions alike.

Responsibilities

- Policy owner ([name/role]): keeps this policy aligned with current GOV.UK guidance and answers eligibility questions.
- Line managers: arrange the pregnancy risk assessment, agree cover plans, and manage keeping-in-touch contact sensitively.
- Payroll ([name/role]): calculates statutory and any enhanced maternity pay and confirms dates in writing.
- Employees: tell us about the pregnancy by the statutory deadline and give notice of leave dates as set out below.

Notification and antenatal care

We encourage employees to tell [their manager or name/role] about a pregnancy early, in confidence, so we can carry out a risk assessment and arrange time off for antenatal care. Formal notification of the

expected week of childbirth and the intended leave start date must be given by the statutory deadline — check GOV.UK for the current rules — usually supported by the MATB1 certificate from a midwife or GP.

- Pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal appointments. Give [notice period] where possible so cover can be arranged.
- On notification, [name/role] carries out a risk assessment of the employee's work and adjusts duties, hours, or workstation where needed, reviewing it as the pregnancy progresses.

Maternity leave

Eligible employees can take up to 52 weeks of statutory maternity leave, made up of ordinary and additional maternity leave. The employee chooses when leave starts, within the rules on GOV.UK, and a short period of leave immediately after the birth is compulsory — check current guidance for the details.

We confirm the expected return date in writing within [number] days of receiving notice. Annual leave continues to accrue throughout maternity leave and can be added to the start or end of it by agreement.

Maternity pay

Statutory maternity pay is available for up to 39 weeks for employees who meet the eligibility conditions. Rates and thresholds are set by government and change most years — payroll uses the current figures on GOV.UK.

[If [Your company] offers enhanced maternity pay, set out the amount, the qualifying service, and any repayment condition here. If not, delete this paragraph and state that maternity pay is at the statutory rate.]

Keeping in touch during leave

- We may make reasonable contact during leave — for example about significant workplace changes, promotion opportunities, or the return date. Contact method and frequency are agreed before leave starts.
- Keeping-in-touch (KIT) days let an employee work a limited number of days during leave without ending it — check GOV.UK for the current maximum. KIT days are voluntary for both sides and paid at [rate].
- The employee will be told about any restructure, redundancy exercise, or vacancy that affects their role, at the same time as colleagues who are at work.

Returning to work

The default return date is the end of the 52 weeks. An employee who wants to return earlier gives notice as set out in current GOV.UK guidance and in their confirmation letter. An employee returning from ordinary maternity leave is entitled to return to the same job; after additional maternity leave the right is to the same job or, where that is not reasonably practicable, a suitable alternative on terms no less favourable.

Requests to change hours or working pattern on return are handled under our flexible working policy. Managers arrange a return-to-work conversation in the first week to cover changes, priorities, and any support needed.

Records and review

Notification records, risk assessments, confirmation letters, KIT day logs, and pay calculations are kept in [system/location] in line with our data retention policy. This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] and whenever statutory rules change. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Decide before editing whether [Your company] pays enhanced maternity pay or statutory only — the pay section reads very differently depending on the answer.
2. Check the current rates, eligibility conditions, and notice deadlines on GOV.UK and reference them rather than hard-coding figures that will date.
3. Name a real policy owner and make sure payroll knows who confirms dates in writing.
4. Cross-check the keeping-in-touch section against what your managers actually do — over-contacting people on leave is a common complaint.
5. Brief every line manager on the notification and risk assessment steps; most claims start with a manager improvising.

Official guidance

- › [GOV.UK — Maternity pay and leave](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Shared parental 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-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.