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The University of Manchester



MATERNITY AND PREGNANCY

Guidance for Managers

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The University provides additional benefits for pregnant members of staff, and is committed to supporting them throughout their pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.

Purpose of Notes

The purpose of these notes is to provide guidance for managers on supporting staff in managing pregnancy at work, maternity leave and returning to work.

This guide is intended to help you:

- Effectively plan before and during a colleague's maternity leave, as well as their return to work.
- To support them to balance work and family life.
- To maintain appropriate communication with your colleague during their leave.
- To highlight the benefits available to staff throughout their pregnancy and on their return to work.
- Plan and hold appropriate conversations with staff before, during and following a period of maternity leave.

YOUR RESPONSIBLE FOR:

In relation to maternity leave, it is the **responsibility of the manager** to:

- Work with the member of staff to agree how to keep in touch during the maternity leave.
- Plan for and arrange cover for the maternity leave period.
- Consider and respond to any flexible working requests made under the Flexible Working Policy.

For more information contact:

0161 275 4499

HRServices@manchester.ac.uk

PLANNING maternity leave

Notification of pregnancy

It is common for women to wait until after their first trimester to notify their employer that they are pregnant. Whenever you are advised of a pregnancy, ensure that your Human Resources representative is notified.

Planning for maternity leave

It is useful to develop a handover timetable with the member of staff well in advance of the maternity leave commencing.

Discuss and agree with the member of staff how they want to be kept in touch with departmental news or changes while they are on leave.

The following questions (though not exhaustive) will help you to think about a careful plan of how their work can be managed and will enable you to have a focused discussion about cover arrangements (if applicable) during the period of leave.

- What needs to be completed before the period of maternity leave and what help is needed to complete these activities (and from whom)?
- What are the key projects or pieces of work that will need to continue through the maternity leave? Discuss and agree how these are to continue during the maternity leave.

- What cover is required to ensure that the role and its requirements are met during maternity leave? Consider such issues as the type of cover, skills and knowledge required, where the cover would come from (externally/internally), any funding implications etc.

Planning for maternity cover

You may need to make arrangements to cover the role and responsibilities of the member of staff going on leave. If you need to recruit, please follow the normal recruitment and selection process. It may be possible to offer the role as an internal secondment opportunity.

It is a good idea to involve the member of staff going on maternity leave in discussions concerning arrangements for cover, and even the recruitment and selection process if they wish to do so.

Keeping in touch

Before the member of staff goes on maternity leave, discuss with her how she wishes to keep in touch during her leave. It is a good idea to agree frequency and method of contact. For example, would she rather have a regular email, a phone call or come into the office occasionally.

Staff on maternity leave are entitled to ten Keeping in Touch days during their maternity leave. These are days that can be used (there is no obligation on you to provide them, nor the individual on leave to take them) for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. These days are paid at the normal salary rate. Discuss with the member of staff whether she is interested in undertaking any KIT days and agree arrangements.

Annual leave

Staff on maternity leave continue to accrue holidays. Holidays cannot be taken at the same time as maternity leave. They can however, be taken before or after. Up to one week can also be carried over into the next holiday year. Discuss arrangements for leave prior to the leave commencing.

Time off for antenatal care

All pregnant members of staff are entitled to take reasonable time off as required for antenatal care. This includes any appointment made on the advice of a doctor, midwife or health visitor.

Sickness during pregnancy

If a member of staff is ill for a pregnancy related reason, please ensure that it is recorded as such. Pregnancy related illness does not count towards a sickness record and staff cannot be subject to any sanction because of it. If the member of staff is ill in the four weeks prior to the date they were intended to commence maternity leave, then maternity leave will automatically begin.

During maternity leave

Ensure that you keep in touch during the maternity leave period as agreed. Staff on maternity leave should also be aware of opportunities that arise in the department, for example new roles, promotion or learning and development.

Human Resources will write to your employee to confirm the latest date they are expected to return to work after maternity leave – this will be at the end of the 52nd week. If the member of staff wants to return sooner than this date, she should give 28 days' notice in writing. Please contact Human Resources if you receive confirmation of an early return date, so that they can ensure pay and leave records are correct.

YOUR PLANNING CHECKLIST



- Develop a handover timetable with your member of staff
- Go through current and key projects agree deadlines
- Check what cover you made need
- Agree when your staff member will take any accrued leave

RETURNING to work

Coming back from maternity leave can be an exciting time, but it is recognised that it can also be a challenge in some ways, to return to work after any extended break.

To help best plan for your member of staff's return, consider the following questions and hold appropriate discussions to plan for a successful and effective return:

- Is there anything that you or other team members need to do to prepare ready for the return to work? Does any equipment need to be provided?
- How would the member of staff like their first few days to be organised and structured to ensure that there is an effective re-entry into the workplace?
- What support does the member of staff require in the early days of the return to enable an effective return to work?

Flexible working

It is increasingly common for staff to want to work flexibility to achieve a balance between childcare and work. The term 'flexible working' covers any variation to existing timing, hours or location of a role. Flexible working can be temporary or permanent. Staff returning from maternity leave and wishing to make a flexible working request should do so under the Flexible Working Policy. It is a good idea to encourage staff to express their wishes around flexible working as early as possible so due consideration can be made, and for any changes to be put in place. Ideally, requests should be made around three months prior to the return to work.

If things don't go to plan

Sadly, some pregnancies and early stages of infancy do not always go ahead as planned. If you have a member of staff who is affected by any pre or post birth difficulties, consider the following:

- Depending on the circumstances, she may still be entitled to the planned maternity leave. The Maternity Leave Policy provides more information on this, and Human Resources can also be consulted for advice.
- The member of staff may wish to return from leave sooner or later than initially planned. Preferences should be accommodated wherever possible. Phased returns can also be considered.
- Agree communications to team colleagues, based on the member of staff's wishes.
- Ensure that the member of staff is aware of support that is available, including our counseling service. Details are available on StaffNet.

YOUR TIPS



- Arrange a return to work meeting to agree with the member of staff how she will be re-introduced to her work. Make sure she is aware of any administrative or organisational changes that have taken place in her absence.
- Agree regular meetings / reviews during the first few weeks to ensure that she is settling in well and discuss any particular needs.
- Re-set both short and long-term objectives.
- If the member of staff will be continuing to breastfeed, ensure she is aware of the relevant facilities.
- Support the member of staff to rebuild their networks and make them aware of mentoring/coaching opportunities. (There is an internal network of parents returning from family leave. More information is available on the Equality and Diversity pages of StaffNet).
- Ensure that you are familiar with the relevant policies, for example, Flexible Working Policy and Parental Leave Policy.

FREQUENTLY asked questions

Staff typically have many questions relating to maternity leave, pay and procedure. The answers to the most frequently asked questions are within in our guidance document to maternity leave for staff.

What happens if a pregnant member of staff is ill?

Staff should follow the normal process for advising you and providing Fit Notes if applicable. If she is ill for pregnancy related reasons in the four weeks prior to their leave date, maternity leave will immediately commence.

One of my team has advised me they she is pregnant. She is also on a fixed term contract. How does that affect anything?

Staff on a fixed term contract have the same entitlements to pay and leave providing they meet the qualifying criteria. If the fixed term contract ends during the maternity leave and is not renewed, the entitlement to the enhanced University maternity pay will cease but SMP will continue to be paid.

How does the University maternity entitlement differ from the statutory one?

The University offers enhanced maternity pay to eligible employees, based on length of service. The current entitlements are set out in the Maternity Leave Policy.

What happens if a member of staff decides not to return after maternity leave?

She should provide written notice in accordance with the contract of employment.

When can maternity leave start?

Maternity leave can begin on any date after the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC). The EWC is confirmed on the MATB1 form around the 20th week of pregnancy.

Can the member of staff return to work on a phased basis?

There is no contractual right to do so. However, if it can be accommodated operationally then it is fine to agree this. Make sure that Human Resources have been advised to ensure that any changes to pay are reflected during the phased return

I have a member of staff going on maternity leave who has already confirmed she wants to work flexibly on her return. What should I do?

Ask her to make a formal flexible working request. Normally, we recommend that this be submitted around three months before the end of the maternity leave to return to enable consideration and response in time for the return.

Can holiday be taken during maternity leave?

All holiday must be taken outside of the maternity leave period. It is not possible to be on maternity leave and holiday at the same time. Holiday can be taken immediately before or after maternity leave.

Can holiday be carried forward into next year if it has been unused due to maternity leave?

In most cases there should be sufficient time leading up to the leave period to effectively plan the use of holiday in advance of the maternity leave period. The University allows up to one week's holiday to be carried over into the next holiday year.

Can I ask someone on maternity leave to come into work?

The University is allowed to make reasonable contact with staff whilst they are on maternity leave. They are not however obliged to do any work or attend any work related events during maternity leave. If both parties agree, one of 10 Keeping in Touch days could be used. These should be agreed in advance. The purpose of these days is to keep staff on leave informed and up to date on developments within the department or University. This may include attending a conference, undertaking training or a team event.

Related Documents

[Flexible Working Policy](#)
[Maternity Policy](#)
[Maternity guidance for staff.](#)

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