

Occupational Health Service

Guidance for New and Expectant Mothers at Work

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires Employers to pay particular attention to risks to the health at work of women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breast feeding.

Pregnancy should not be equated with ill health. It should be regarded as part of everyday life and its health and safety implications can generally be adequately addressed by normal good health and safety procedures. Definition of “New and Expectant Mothers at Work”

Legislation:

- Management Health And Safety Regulations [1999 [MHSW]
- The Workplace [Health, Safety , Welfare] Regulations 1992 require provision of suitable rest facilities
- The Equality Act 2010 protection for pregnant women and those on maternity leave against discrimination and which can include failing to carry out a risk assessment under MHSW.

Definition:

The phrase “new or expectant mother” means a worker who is pregnant, who has given birth within the previous six months or who is breast-feeding. “Given birth” is defined in the regulations as; delivered a living child, or after 24 weeks of pregnancy – a stillborn child.

Risk Assessments:

Many of the risks are already covered by existing legislation, and control measures should already be in place. However, the legislation highlights the need for full written risk assessments of the work environment, materials and activities, to ensure that appropriate protection is offered to the mother and child.

The risk assessment should take into account:

- Whether there are any new or expectant mothers working in the department.
- Whether there may be new or expectant mothers working in the department in the future
- Whether any of these employees work with agents or carry out activities that pose a threat to the health and safety of themselves or their child
- Whether any of these employees carry out night work

Under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 suitable rest facilities must be provided for workers who are pregnant or breastfeeding

The arrangements for making and recording risk assessments must be stated in the School/Directorate Safety Policy. If, after taking whatever preventative action is reasonable, there are concerns that an excess risk exists (beyond that present outside the workplace) the Head of School/Directorate must:

- Temporarily adjust working conditions or hours of work

- If that is not possible or would not avoid the risk, then discuss with the Faculty/Directorate HR Manager the possibility of alternative work or paid leave, for as long as is necessary to protect the health and safety of mother and child

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=10019>

The following aspects of pregnancy should be considered when undertaking the risk assessment process and the impact of pregnancy and work:

- Morning sickness
- Backache
- Varicose veins
- Haemorrhoids
- Access to toilet facilities
- Increasing size
- Tiredness
- Balance
- Comfort
- Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach, may be impaired due to increasing size

Common risks/hazards for new and expectant mothers include:

- **Physical** e.g. Standing or sitting for long periods. Long working hours or excessively noisy workplaces
Workstation and posture issues
- **Biological** e.g. Agents including fixed human tissues and body fluids (e.g. blood) and any micro-organisms, cell culture, or human endoparasite which may cause infection, allergy and toxicity or otherwise create a hazard to human health
- **Chemical** as above
- **Human Factors** e.g. Work-related stress or threat of violence in the workplace

Covid 19 Guidance :

- **General University Guidance:** <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/resources/>
- **Government advice to pregnant workers re Covid19**
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): advice for pregnant employees - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees)
- The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists [RCOG.org.uk] provide clinical guidance relating to the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and pregnancy within the substantive **Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection in pregnancy clinical** guidance available on [2020-09-10-occupational-health-statement-rcog-rcm-fom.pdf](https://www.rcog.org.uk/~/media/rcogmedia/documents/clinical%20guidance/2020-09-10-occupational-health-statement-rcog-rcm-fom.pdf)

It is important to note that:

- Pregnant women of any gestation are at no more risk of contracting the virus than any other non-pregnant person who is in similar health
- For those women who are 28 weeks pregnant and beyond, there is an increased risk of becoming severely ill should you contract COVID-19 (this is true of any viral illness contracted, such as flu)

Responsibilities:

Employee Responsibilities:

Employees are required to inform their Line Manager/Supervisor as soon as they are aware they are pregnant.

If an employee chooses not to inform their Line Manager/Supervisor until a later stage in their pregnancy this will be their responsibility as personal risk assessments cannot be reviewed in relation to the pregnant worker until this is known.

Employees should bring to the attention of their Line Manager/Supervisor any concerns they have relating to their health and safety at work due to being a “new or expectant mother”.

Line Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities:

To undertake a specific pregnancy at work risk assessment and review at appropriate stages

Explanation of risk assessment : <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/ra/>
Risk assessment form [blank] <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=10019>

If there is any doubt about the nature of the hazards, the degree of risk, or the health of the mother or child, additional advice can be provided from Occupational Health Services via the usual referral process

Occupational Health Responsibilities:

Occupational Health will provide advice and support to employees and managers regarding any health concerns of a ‘new or expectant mother’

Email Addresses for Occupational Health Service:

millocchealth@manchester.ac.uk or waterloocchealth@manchester.ac.uk

- The Occupational Health Service will be aware of any new pregnant worker by -
The individual self-referring to the occupational health service for advice,
The Line Manager/Supervisor or HR Services referring the individual via the referral process whereby additional advice/support has been requested following the initial completion of the pregnancy risk assessment
- The Line Manager/Supervisor is responsible for informing the occupational health service of any pregnant worker based on the local pregnancy risk assessment that identifies anyone currently working or is likely to be regularly exposed to risks associated to cause concern to the pregnant worker and the child and where further advice is required
- The School Safety Advisor would be asked to assess if there is a hazardous risk associated to the working environment and pregnancy.

Review:

- The Occupational Health Service will undertake an assessment of the individual (if required) following the request of the individual, the Line Manager/Supervisor or HR Services

Referral:

The appointment will be to:

- Discuss the individuals current health and pregnancy/view the completed pregnancy risk assessment/

work practices/hazards within the working environment/ PPE/provide advice

Useful Contacts/Information:

Health and Safety Executive [HSE.GOV.UK <https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/worker/index.htm>

1. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/employer/risk-assessment.htm>
2. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/employer/rest-breastfeeding-at-work.htm>
3. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf>
4. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Health and safety regulations:

5. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc13.pdf>
6. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>

General overview of risk management video: <https://youtu.be/xyANahuhGs0>

The University of Manchester Safety Services Guidance :

1. <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/>
2. http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/topic_a-z/
3. <http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/ra/>

Gov.uk Pregnancy rights guidance – [Pregnant employees' rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pregnant-employees-rights)

COVID guidance

1. UK Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees>
2. Faculty Occupational Medicine [2020-09-10-occupational-health-statement-rcog-rcm-fom.pdf](https://www.fom.ac.uk/2020-09-10-occupational-health-statement-rcog-rcm-fom.pdf)
3. Higher Educations Occupational Practitioners [HEOPS]
4. Royal College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology [RCOG]
5. Royal College of Midwives [RCM]

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