New & Expectant Mothers

There is a legal requirement to carry out a risk assessment which takes account of changes in risks as pregnancy progresses.



Wherever possible, the risk should be avoided by adaptations or substitution, e.g. providing suitable alternative equipment to allow the work to be conducted safely and without risk to health. Where this is not possible, the provisions of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 come into effect and unsafe working is prohibited.

**Effects of Pregnancy**

There are a wide range of effects on the body from pregnancy; some positive, some negative, and managers need to be sensitive to the changing needs of a pregnant employee and make reasonable adjustments to accommodate these.

The risk assessment must be carried out by Line Managers as soon as the staff member has notified you of the pregnancy. Human Resources and the ~~Occupational Health & Wellbeing Adviser/~~Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team are available to assist with completion of the risk assessment and help with determining control measures if requested to do so by the Line Manager.

There are specific hazards which may present an increased risk whilst pregnant:

* Carbon monoxide (including passive smoking)
* ~~Covid-19 (see section below)~~
* Driving/travelling
* Excessive pressure
* Excessive standing/sitting
* Extremes of hot and cold
* Infectious diseases
* Ionising radiation
* Lead
* Long working hours
* Manual handling
* Movement/Balance/Agility/Confined Spaces
* Noise
* Non-ionising electromagnetic radiation
* Pesticides
* Shocks and vibrations
* Toxic chemicals
* Use of personal protective equipment
* Violence/threatening behaviour
* Work with display screen equipment
* Working alone
* Working at heights

**~~Pregnancy and COVID-19~~**

~~Pregnancy does not increase the chance of getting COVID-19, with the risk of becoming either ill, or seriously ill, being no higher than anyone else.~~

~~Pregnant women are in the moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) group simply as a precaution. This is because they can sometimes be more at risk from viruses like flu if they’re pregnant. It's not clear if this also applies to COVID-19 (as it's a new virus), however, it's safer to include pregnant women in the moderate risk group.~~

~~Although it's very rare for pregnant women to become seriously ill if they get COVID-19, this may be more likely later in pregnancy. Where this occurs, there's a small chance the baby may be born early or the individual may be advised to give birth earlier than the planned due date.~~

~~Any specific risk assessment undertaken by a Line Manager in consultation with a pregnant member of staff, should include COVID as a consideration, in addition to any other perceived identified risks as detailed above (under ‘Effects of Pregnancy’).~~

~~Where COVID is identified as a specific risk to the individual, apart from a small number of ‘campus-based roles’ (where specific control measures may need to be considered on a bespoke 1:1 basis), it may be that for the duration of the pregnancy the individual is advised that they can work from home.~~

~~Any pregnant member of staff who has any general health concerns is advised to talk to their GP and/or midwife, and where necessary complete BU’s~~[~~Working on Campus 2021 – Health Proforma~~](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VZbi7ZfQ5EK7tfONQn-_uD68qDn35bpBqUKqWTsCkFJUMDFTTUNTQlZIR0ROT0E2QkRCOFA2UEE5Qy4u)~~.~~

**~~For further information, please see the following resources;~~**

[**~~NHS Pregnancy & Coronavirus~~**](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/)

[**~~NHS Pregnancy, breastfeeding, fertility and coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination~~**](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nhs.uk%2Fconditions%2Fcoronavirus-covid-19%2Fcoronavirus-vaccination%2Fpregnancy-breastfeeding-fertility-and-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination%2F&data=04%7C01%7Cpbowtell%40bournemouth.ac.uk%7Cdaf40235ce4b4adae05c08d955891016%7Cede29655d09742e4bbb5f38d427fbfb8%7C0%7C0%7C637634869424382069%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=GfivkzSEjyCwW%2BDgP5r7e92FtAg%2FY06SKKUmAug3x20%3D&reserved=0)

**Returning to work**

On returning to work, a number of considerations may need to be made:

* If the woman is returning to work as a breastfeeding mother, the University's breastfeeding facilities are listed below. There is supportive guidance for women who continue to breastfeed on their return to work and guidance for Line Managers too.
* The health effects of pregnancy can continue until six months after the birth and women who have had a caesarean may have particular problems with manual handling and general mobility - this may include driving.
* As pregnancy and birth is such an individual experience, the social, psychological, physiological and hormonal effects of having a baby will vary considerably, bear in mind that this is a time when women may be susceptible to stress.
* The physical and psychological effects of a miscarriage or still birth should be taken into account and managed sensitively.

**Breastfeeding Facilities**

 BU has a small number of secure Breastfeeding Facilities (these are private, contain comfortable seating and a refrigerator).

* Bournemouth Gateway Building – Room BG-214 – The Athena Swan Parenting Room. The room is locked via a physical key which is available via the main building reception.
* Dorset House - Room D227 (Keypad access control - please contact Health, Safety & Wellbeing x62713 for access code)
* St Mary's Hospital Portsmouth - Birthing Centre (For Staff & Students operating from the hospital)

**Useful Links**

* [Maternity Benefits Scheme](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/humanresourcesstaffhandbook/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/maternitypaternityadoptionandspl/maternityleaveandpay/)
* [New & Expectant Mothers Who Work (HSE)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/employer/index.htm)
* [Guidance: Supporting breastfeeding mothers on their return to work](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Line%20Manager%20Guidance%20on%20Breastfeeding.docx?Web=1)
* [Guidance: Returning to work as a breastfeeding mother](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Breast%20Feeding%20Guidance%20for%20Mothers%20Returning%20to%20work.docx?Web=1)
* [Employee Assistance Programme for advice about pregnancy, birth, change etc.](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/occupationalhealthwellbeing/employeeassistanceprogramme/)