

**MATERNITY FAQS**

Below is a list of frequently asked questions. For more detailed information and a full explanation please read the [Maternity Leave and Pay information](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx).

**I’m expecting a baby! When and how should I let the University know that I am pregnant? Congratulations! It’s a good idea for you to speak to your line manager as soon as you can, so that the University can support you and ensure that you’re working in a safe environment.**

**To notify the University of your pregnancy formally, you should complete the “Application for Maternity Leave and Pay” form, no later than 15 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), and send it to HR and your line manager. You should send your MATB1 form to HR as evidence of your EWC as soon as you receive it from your Doctor or midwife.**

**What is a MATB1 Certificate?**

**This is a certificate issued by your GP or midwife, verifying your pregnancy and confirming your EWC (or actual date of birth in cases where the child is born early), and is available from 20 weeks before your EWC.**

**I don’t want my line manager to know I am expecting a baby at the moment but I have lots of questions. Who can I speak to?**

**You are able to speak in confidence to an** [HR Adviser](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/HR-OD_OrgChart.pdf) **who can be contacted on ext. 61133.**

**You can also contact the Employee Assistance Programme, which provides all staff with a free and confidential helpline with unlimited access to information, advice and support, and onward referral to telephone or face-to-face counselling where appropriate. The service is available 24 hours, 365 days a year Tel: 0800 1116 387.**

**What happens once I’ve told my line manager I’m pregnant?**

Your manager should meet with you. You should complete a [risk assessment form](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment-and-policy-template.doc) with your manager. You should complete the [Application for Maternity Leave and Pay form](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx) and send it in hard copy to HR, and also give a copy to your line manager. You should send your MATB1 form to HR as evidence of your EWC. The [Application for Maternity Leave and Pay form](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx) and the MATB1 must reach HR by the 15th week before the EWC.

**How much maternity leave am I entitled to?**

You are entitled to up to 52 weeks maternity leave, regardless of how long you have worked at the University. The University assumes you will be taking 52 weeks maternity leave unless you tell us otherwise. You must take a minimum of 2 weeks maternity leave (Compulsory Leave Period) immediately after the baby is born.

**What is the earliest date or the latest date I can start my maternity leave?**

You can start your maternity leave up to 11 weeks before the EWC at the earliest, or on the Expected Due Date (EDD) at the latest.

**Do I need to take my full entitlement to maternity leave?**

No, you can choose when you return to work providing you follow the notice requirements outlined in the [Maternity Leave and Pay information](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx) and your return to work is not during the Compulsory Leave Period, which is the two week period immediately following the date of the child’s birth.

**How much of my maternity leave is paid?**

The exact amount of maternity pay you will receive depends on your recognised length of continuous service, what your weekly earnings are and (for Enhanced Maternity Pay) whether you return to work after your maternity leave. The [Maternity Leave and Pay information](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx) explains in more detail what you will be entitled to during your maternity leave.

If you have more than 52 weeks recognised continuous service at the QW you will be entitled to 26 weeks Enhanced Maternity Pay (EMP) at full pay, followed by 13 weeks Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). The rest of the maternity leave period is unpaid. The EMP includes any entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP).

If you have between 26 and 52 weeks recognised continuous service at the Qualifying Week (QW) (the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth), you will be entitled to 39 weeks Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). The rest of the maternity leave period is unpaid.

If you do not qualify for maternity pay you will not receive any salary, but will be provided by the Payroll Department with an SMP1 form so that you can claim Maternity Allowance (MA) directly through the Department for Work and Pensions.

**Do I pay tax on my maternity pay?**

Yes, both EMP and SMP are treated as earnings and are therefore subject to Income Tax and National Insurance deductions.

**Am I still eligible to receive maternity pay if I am employed on a Fixed Term or Part Time Hourly Paid contract of employment?**

Provided you have 26 weeks of recognised continuous service prior to the Qualifying Week (the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth), are still employed in that week and you satisfy the national insurance lower earnings limit rule and other conditions regarding notification you will be entitled to the maternity entitlement that your continuous service qualifies you for. If your contract ends between the QW and the end of the statutory maternity pay period the University will continue to pay your statutory maternity pay until the end of the statutory maternity pay period, even though you are no longer an employee.

**Am I still eligible for pay progression or Academic promotion whilst on maternity leave?**

During your maternity leave you will continue to be eligible for general pay awards and consideration for pay progression/salary increments or promotion providing that you meet the scheme’s criteria.

**Do I accrue annual leave when I’m on maternity leave?**

Yes. Your annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue at your contractual rate during your maternity leave. This is inclusive of UK recognised public/bank holidays as well as any planned University closure days at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, pro rata for part-time staff.

You should take any annual leave you have accrued up to your maternity leave start date, before your leave starts.

You can use any annual leave accrued during your maternity leave either prior to your maternity leave commencing, or immediately following your maternity leave, i.e. once your maternity leave ends, but prior to returning to work.

You should be aware that once you return to work the normal rules for carrying annual leave forward will apply.

**How do I receive my payslips while I’m on maternity leave?**

You can login to the CHR System while you are on maternity leave and check your payslips in the usual way.

You will need to install VMWare which allows BU to maintain the required security measures in order to protect the personal data held in the HR system that are available via the Portal. You can find instructions on how to install VMWare to your specific device [here](https://bournemouth.service-now.com/sp?id=search&q=horizon). If you have any difficulties with installing VMWare you will need to contact the IT Service Desk, however, if once it has been installed you continue to have difficulties in accessing the system please email hrenquiries@bournemouth.ac.uk.

**What happens to my pension contributions whilst I am on maternity leave?**

If you are a member of an Occupational Pension Scheme, pensionable service will continue to be accrued as normal during ordinary maternity leave, regardless of whether you are entitled to receive maternity pay.

Whilst on paid maternity leave, pension contributions will continue to be deducted from your salary. Should you opt for the additional unpaid Maternity Leave and maternity pay has expired, your pension contributions will cease. During any period of unpaid maternity leave it is possible to arrange to make pension contributions / buy additional pension in order to avoid a gap in the contribution record.

**I think that my job could be hazardous to my baby - who can I discuss this with?**

Women who are pregnant, have given birth within the last 6 months or are breastfeeding are owed a special duty of care in the workplace. This is particularly important if you work with physical, chemical or biological agents.

Even if you are fit to work, you may feel your job puts you at risk in some way. For example, your job may involve a lot of lifting, or you may work with hazardous chemicals or other substances. If this is the case, you should speak to your manager and contact a member of Human Resources for advice. Alternative work may need to be sought for you, together with medical advice if necessary. This may involve a change in your duties, or a temporary secondment to another post.

If ensuring a safe pregnancy means having to withdraw from particular types of work (e.g. lab-based work), the impact of this on work outputs will be taken into account on a pro-rata basis in processes such as appraisals and promotions.

**Do I need to use my annual leave to attend appointments to see my midwife and for appointments at the hospital, or am I entitled to take this time off?**

You are entitled to reasonable paid time off work for ante-natal appointments if they are made on the advice of your doctor / midwife. Ante-natal care may include relaxation or parent craft classes as well as medical examinations, if these classes are recommended by your doctor/midwife. Fathers and partners of pregnant women may take unpaid time off to attend up to two ante-natal appointments with their partner.

**My baby is due in eight weeks but my Doctor has signed me off work for six weeks because I have pre-eclampsia. I elected to start my maternity leave on the EDD, will this still be possible?**

Under statutory regulations, if you are off sick for a pregnancy related reason during the four week period before the EDD, then your maternity leave and maternity pay will automatically start whether you want it to or not and cannot be stopped once it has started. So although you have been signed off for six weeks, you will not actually be able to return to work before the baby is born.

**What if my baby comes early?**

Ordinary maternity leave is triggered by childbirth. If you give birth while you are still at work or on annual leave, your maternity leave will commence immediately on the day the baby is born.

**What if my baby arrives late?**

**If you have started your maternity leave and your baby arrives later than expected, your maternity leave is not affected.**

**What contact do I have with my manager whilst I’m on maternity leave?**

You and your line manager are encouraged to maintain contact whilst you are on maternity leave. This may be to discuss your plans for returning to work, any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or simply to update you on developments at work during your absence.

The way in which contact will be made and the frequency of any contact should be discussed and agreed by you and your line manager prior to your maternity leave.

**What are KIT days?**

While you are on maternity leave, you can take up to 10 paid ‘Keeping in Touch’ days (also referred to as ‘KIT’ days), without your maternity leave or pay being affected. You are not obliged to undertake any work during your maternity leave if you prefer not to.

You will need to agree the arrangements for any KIT days, in advance, with your line manager, who will inform HR that you will be undertaking a KIT day. HR will then confirm the details of your KIT day(s) in writing. Children cannot be brought to the workplace on KIT days.

If an employee works more than ten keeping-in-touch days then their maternity leave and pay will automatically come to an end.

**Are the 10 KIT days pro-rated for part time staff?**

No, up to 10 KIT days are available to all eligible staff, no matter what their hours of work are.

**Do I have to let BU know when I want to come back?**

Once you have submitted your [Application for Maternity Leave and Pay Form](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Maternity%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx) to HR, you will be sent a letter by HR to provide notification of the date that you are expected to return to work. This will always be 52 weeks from the date you are planning to start your maternity leave. If you are going to take 52 weeks then you don’t have to do anything else. But if you want to come back sooner, then you need to give the University at least 8 weeks notice of the date you are intending to return using the [return to work form](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/handbook/family/maternity/appendices/appendixD_confirm_return.doc).

**Will my continuity of service be affected by taking maternity leave?**

No. Where a member of staff returns to work following maternity leave, the period of absence due to maternity leave does not affect the accrual of continuous service.

**If I want to change the dates or amounts of leave I’m going to take. What do I need to do?**

Before you start maternity leave you can change the date that you want to start but you have to give the University 28 days notice of the new date. Once you’ve started maternity leave if you want to change the date you’re due to come back you have to give the University at least 8 weeks notice. If you want to come back earlier you must give at least 8 weeks notice from the new intended date of return. If you want to come back later you should give 8 weeks notice from the original return date.

**What happens if I am ill during my maternity leave?**

**If you are have a period of illness after the birth of your child, the University will not need to be informed as your maternity rights will be unaffected - either your Maternity Pay will continue to be paid or your unpaid leave will continue.**

**If you are unwell and your return to work is imminent, we would advise you to contact the HR team as this may affect the date you return to work.**

**What is my entitlement to maternity leave if I decide to leave the University before my notified start date of maternity leave?**

**You will not be eligible for maternity leave but may still be eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if you were employed after the 15th week before the Expected Week of Confinement (EWC). In this situation you should contact the HR team for advice.**

**What happens if my pregnancy does not go to plan? What if things go wrong?**

**The University recognises that how an individual who has lost a baby in such circumstances reacts is intensely personal. In some cases, an individual may wish to return to work quite quickly after the experience to enable her to carry on 'as normal'. Others may find they need a longer time to recover. Anybody in this situation is encouraged to contact a member of Human Resources to discuss all the options which are available to you.**

**Fortunately these situations are rare, but if your baby is stillborn prior to the 24th week of pregnancy you will not be eligible for maternity leave or maternity pay. Any absence in such circumstances will be treated as sickness absence, and your normal contractual sick pay entitlement will apply, subject to the normal notification procedures.**

**If the stillbirth occurs in the 24th week of pregnancy or later you will still be entitled to receive the maternity pay and leave entitlement that your continuous service qualifies you for.**

**If your baby is born alive, even very briefly, you will still be entitled to receive the maternity pay and leave entitlement that your continuous service qualifies you for.**

**What if I resign and don’t return from maternity leave?**

**If you decide not to return to work after the birth of your baby then you should notify your Line Manager and Human Resources, in writing, giving your contractual period of notice and stating the date of your resignation. If you do not specify a date then your resignation will be effective from the end of the statutory maternity pay period.**

**If you have received** Enhanced Maternity Pay (EMP) which is 26 weeks at full pay, **you will be required to pay this back to the University.** On confirmation of your resignation to leave the University an HR and Payroll representative will calculate and notify you of this overpayment; and discuss an acceptable repayment plan to the individual and to the employer.

**If you are employed on a temporary or fixed term contract, and the contract expires and is not renewed or is renewed but does not enable a return for 26 weeks following the period of maternity leave, repayment of the difference between EMP and SMP will be required.**

**I’m nervous about my return to work after maternity leave. How will I be able to transition back?**

**You should speak to your line manager in the first instance. They may be able to guide you to information, advice and or coaching available through the Organisational Development team. KIT days should be used prior to your return to help with your reintegration. Academic staff may want to refer to the** [Workload Planning Guidance document](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/WLP%20Guidance%202016.docx)**.**

**Are there facilities for expressing milk and breastfeeding at BU?**

Yes. BU provides the following secure Breastfeeding Facilities (these are private, contain comfortable seating and a refrigerator).

* Bournemouth House - Room B241 (The key to this facility can be signed out at BU 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)

**What about flexible working?**

**Full consideration will be given to requests from members of staff who wish to change their working pattern upon return from maternity leave. Staff members should submit a flexible working application as far in advance of the return date as reasonably practicable.**

Flexible working in the context of the “right to request” applies to a permanent change to an employee’s contract of employment and does not cover occasional or temporary changes.

**For further details please refer to the University’s** [Right to Request Flexible Working](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx) document**.**

**Can I still claim childcare vouchers when receiving maternity pay?**

**Whilst on maternity leave you will be able to continue sacrificing contractual maternity pay (over and above SMP) and receive vouchers.  If you do then your reduced salary will be used for maternity pay calculations.  Under a recent legal change, as childcare vouchers via a salary sacrifice scheme are deemed to be a non-pay benefit, the University will then continue to provide you with the same amount of vouchers per month even when you are not in receipt of sufficient pay to sacrifice.  These will be funded by the University.**

**From 5 October 2018, childcare voucher schemes will close to new applicants. You may be able to get** [Tax-Free Childcare](https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/tax-free-childcare) **instead.**

**You can keep getting vouchers if you’ve joined a scheme and get your first voucher before the scheme closes in October 2018, as long as:**

* you stay with the same employer and they continue to run the scheme
* you do not take an unpaid career break of longer than a year

**If you get Tax-Free Childcare you cannot continue to claim childcare vouchers if you successfully apply for Tax-Free Childcare.**

**What happens if I am taken into legal custody during my maternity leave?**

You aren’t entitled to SMP (or EMP) for any SMP pay week that you are in legal custody (this usually means you are in prison) or for any week in the pay period after that.

It’s your responsibility to tell us if you are detained in legal custody.

You aren’t in legal custody if you are:

* voluntarily helping police with their enquiries
* out on bail
* serving a suspended sentence

**What other leave is available to me after maternity leave?**

[Parental leave](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Parental%20Leave%20policy.doc) may be taken in addition to any period of maternity leave, [paternity/partner leave](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Paternity_Partner%20Leave%20and%20Pay.doc) or [adoption leave.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Adoption%20Leave%20and%20Pay.docx)

**Unpaid parental leave for a period of up to 18 weeks is available to staff with 12 months recognised continuous service with the University.** [Parental leave](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Parental%20Leave%20policy.doc) **can be taken immediately after unpaid maternity leave unless the woman has elected to transfer her remaining maternity leave entitlement with her partner, or at a later date in accordance with the** [Shared Parental Leave scheme.](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Shared%20Parental%20Leave%20and%20Pay%20Oct%202015.doc)

The right to parental leave is subject to the following conditions:

* A minimum of one year’s continuous service with Bournemouth University or one year’s qualifying service with a previous employer.
* Having parental responsibilities for a child and being named on the child’s birth or adoption certificate.
* The child is under 18 years of age.
* Giving at least 21 days’ notice in writing.
* Provision of evidence of entitlement to parental leave (such as birth or adoption certificate), if requested by the University.

For more information, please refer to the [Parental Leave document.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Parental%20Leave%20policy.doc)

You may also qualify for the **Career Break** or **Academic Study** leave schemes. For more information, please refer to the [Career Break Scheme](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc) and the [Academic Study Leave Policy](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/academic-study-leave-policy.doc).

[**Family and Domestic emergencies - Time off for Dependents.**](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/family-and-domestic-emergencies.doc) The University will provide reasonable unpaid leave in the event of an unforeseen family and domestic emergency which requires immediate attention.  Examples may include:

* A dependant becomes ill, is injured, gives birth or dies
* To arrange care for a dependent who becomes ill or injured
* An unexpected incident involving a child at school or on a school trip.

Further information is available [here.](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/family-and-domestic-emergencies.doc)