

## Antenatal appointments

Antenatal appointments are pregnancy-related appointments. They are made on the advice of a doctor, nurse or midwife.

They could include:

- medical appointments, for example, pregnancy health checks scans
- antenatal courses or parentcraft classes
- classes for pregnancy-related health, fitness or relaxation, for example pregnancy yoga
- sessions for mental health and wellbeing

## Whether time off for appointments is paid

Whether someone has a legal right to paid time off for antenatal care depends on their employment status.

### Employees

Anyone who has the [legal status of employee](#) is entitled to reasonable time off for antenatal appointments. The time off is with full pay.

By law, an employer cannot:

- unreasonably refuse an employee time off during working hours for these appointments
- expect an employee to make up the time later

An employee has this right from their first day of starting a job.

### Agency workers

An agency worker can get paid time off for antenatal appointments if they have completed their 12-week qualifying period.

[Find out about the rights for agency workers after 12 weeks](#)

### Casual workers and zero-hour workers

An employer should consider offering paid time off for appointments to:

- casual workers
- zero-hours workers

There's no legal requirement to do this but it's good practice.

## Taking time off

Someone booking an antenatal appointment should give as much notice as possible.

An employer might agree to someone adjusting their work day to help them attend appointments. For example, allowing someone to work from home if it'll take too long to get back to work after the appointment.

## How much time is allowed

The law does not say how much time can be taken off, only that it must be a 'reasonable' amount.

Usually, someone needs:

- up to 10 antenatal appointments if it's their first baby
- around 7 antenatal appointments if they've had a baby before

A reasonable amount of time off for appointments includes:

- the length of the appointment or class
- travel to and from the appointment or class

Every pregnancy is different. Employers should be flexible and understanding if someone needs more appointments. For example, if they have pre-existing health conditions.

An employer can ask someone to provide an appointment card or other evidence. They can only ask for proof of appointments after the first appointment.

## Time off for partners

Someone's partner might have the right to time off work to go to 2 antenatal appointments with them. This time off is usually unpaid and is for a maximum of 6.5 hours for each appointment.

[Find out about eligibility for going with a partner to pregnancy appointments](#)

## IVF appointments

There's no legal right for time off work for IVF treatment. But employers should treat a worker's IVF appointments the same as any other medical appointment.

It's a good idea for an employer to be open to any requests someone has for:

- working flexibly
- paid time off, unpaid time off or holiday

[Find out more about IVF and work](#)

## If someone does not want to tell their employer they're pregnant

A worker might not be ready to tell their employer they're pregnant. They can choose to take the time as they would another medical appointment. For example, to go to the doctor.

If an employer does not know it's pregnancy-related, they'll treat that time the same as any other medical appointment. This means employees might not get paid for it or have to make up the time later, depending on their contract.

## Resolving problems with time off for appointments

Both employees and agency workers can raise problems informally if they:

- are unreasonably refused time off for antenatal appointments
- are allowed time off but are not paid when attending antenatal appointments

They can do this by [talking with their employer](#).

An agency worker can also raise it with their employment agency.

If that does not resolve the issue they can [raise a grievance](#). This is where they make a formal complaint to their employer.

### Making a claim to an employment tribunal

A formal complaint might not resolve the problem. In these cases, someone might be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal.

There are strict time limits for making a claim to an employment tribunal.

[Find out more about making a claim to an employment tribunal](#)

### Contact the Acas helpline

If you have any questions about time off for antenatal appointments, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).