

Creating a pregnancy and maternity policy

As an employer, you should consider having a pregnancy and maternity policy.

If you have one, you should store it in a place that all workers can easily access. For example, on an intranet or in a staff handbook.

You should work with any recognised trade unions your organisation has when developing and reviewing a policy. You should also check if your organisation has an agreement with the trade unions that requires you to do this.

Reasons for having a policy

A pregnancy and maternity policy can:

- help everyone understand their rights and responsibilities
- help to [prevent pregnancy and maternity discrimination](#)

If you're a small employer, you might not want to create a policy. However, you should still think about your responsibilities and how you would support someone who's pregnant.

What to include

A policy should set out:

- how and when someone should tell you they're pregnant
- your approach to assessing and managing health and safety risks
- processes around pregnancy-related sickness, for example recording pregnancy-related absence separately from other sickness absence
- how you handle time off for antenatal appointments – these are appointments made on the advice of a doctor, nurse or midwife
- how someone should tell you when they'll start and end maternity leave
- how someone can change their maternity leave start date
- your approach to paid holiday that's 'accrued' (built up) during maternity leave
- whether you offer statutory (legal minimum) or enhanced maternity pay
- how you'll keep someone informed of changes when they are on maternity leave
- how keeping in touch (KIT) days work
- how someone will be supported when they return to work
- facilities for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk

To make sure the policy includes any legal obligations and good practice, you can get detailed advice on:

- [pregnancy at work](#)
- [maternity leave and pay](#)

Reviewing your policies and processes

If you have a policy, you should review it regularly and keep it up-to-date.

Your pregnancy and maternity policy might link to other policies and processes in your organisation.

For example, policies or processes relating to:

- absence
- reasonable adjustments
- health and safety
- risk assessments
- paternity leave and pay
- shared parental leave and pay
- neonatal care leave and pay

You should review any linked policies to make sure they're up-to-date and consistent with each other.

Supporting and training managers

As an employer, you should support everyone to follow your pregnancy and maternity policy.

You can support managers by:

- sharing your pregnancy and maternity policy with the whole organisation
- training managers on how to manage pregnancy and maternity leave
- giving clear guidelines for managing pregnancy and maternity – for example how managers will keep in touch with employees on maternity leave

You can use your policy as the basis for any training for managers.

Get more advice and support

If you need help making a pregnancy and maternity policy for your organisation, you can:

- [contact the Acas helpline](#)
- [get tailored support for your organisation](#)