

Pregnancy at work

Telling an employer

If a worker is pregnant, they should tell their employer. This is so the employer can:

- assess any health and safety risks
- support the worker through their pregnancy

When to tell an employer

A pregnant worker does not need to tell their employer as soon as they know they're pregnant. But in some cases they must tell their employer by a certain time. This depends on whether someone is entitled to maternity leave.

If someone is entitled to maternity leave

They must tell their employer they're pregnant no later than the 15th week before the baby is due. They'll need to tell them certain information about when they're taking maternity leave.

Find out about:

- [eligibility for maternity leave](#)
- [planning maternity leave](#), including telling an employer

If a worker is not entitled to maternity leave

A worker who is not entitled to maternity leave should still tell their employer they're pregnant. This is so the employer can do a health and safety risk assessment.

A worker who is not entitled to statutory maternity leave might still be eligible for [maternity pay](#). They should talk to their employer about what they might be eligible for. Agency workers should talk to their employment agency.

How to tell an employer

When a pregnant worker tells their employer, they should do it in writing. For example in a letter or email.

If you're entitled to maternity leave, you can use our [template letter to tell your employer you're pregnant](#).

How an employer should respond

Employers should take a supportive approach if someone tells them they are pregnant.

They must do a [health and safety risk assessment](#) as soon as possible.

If someone tells their employer they are entitled to maternity leave, the [employer must respond in writing](#). For example, in a letter or email.

If a worker is not eligible for maternity leave, an employer does not have to reply in writing. However, it is good practice.

Confidentiality

Employers must keep information shared about pregnancy confidential. A worker might not have told their family and friends yet.

An employer should only tell others if the worker makes it clear they can share. For example, with other workers, clients or customers.

Checking the pregnancy and maternity policy

Workers and managers should check their organisation's pregnancy and maternity policy.

If an organisation does not have a policy, they should consider creating one. Having a policy can:

- help everyone understand their rights and responsibilities
- help to prevent pregnancy and maternity discrimination

Employers should also check other policies to make sure they do not discriminate. For example, policies around absence, recruitment or redundancy.

[Find out more about creating a pregnancy and maternity policy](#)

If a worker is worried about telling their employer

If a worker is worried about telling their employer they are pregnant, they could:

- familiarise themselves with their rights as a pregnant worker
- speak to their trade union representative, if they are a member
- check their organisation's pregnancy and maternity policy

It's against the law for an employer to treat someone unfavourably because they are pregnant. This would be [pregnancy and maternity discrimination](#).

Applying for a job

If someone who's pregnant applies for a new job, they do not have to say they're pregnant. If they do, by law employers must not treat them unfavourably because of it.

For example, an employer cannot use pregnancy as a reason for rejecting someone from a job.

Employers should never ask applicants if they're pregnant or planning to have children.

If an employer thinks someone is pregnant

It's best to take a supportive and sensitive approach if an employer thinks a worker is pregnant.

The worker may have a good reason for not telling their employer straight away. For example, it may be very early in the pregnancy, or they may not have told family or friends yet.

If it's affecting someone's work, an employer could ask them for a private conversation. The employer should not ask them if they are pregnant but could ask if they need any support. This gives someone the chance to talk about their pregnancy if they feel comfortable.

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

Acas also offers [free e-learning on pregnancy and maternity](#).