

## Sickness and difficult pregnancies

Pregnancy affects everyone differently. Someone who is pregnant might experience:

- sickness related to their pregnancy
- physical or mental health difficulties

Workers who are pregnant should talk with their employer so the employer can support them.

### Pregnancy-related sickness

If someone cannot come to work because of a pregnancy-related sickness, they should:

- report in sick in the usual way
- get their usual sick pay

Pregnancy-related sickness can include:

- morning sickness (nausea and vomiting)
- tiredness
- headache
- backache
- bleeding

It might not always be clear whether an sickness is pregnancy-related. If an employer is not sure, they can ask the worker to provide a [fit note](#). The fit note will be from a registered healthcare professional.

Pregnancy-related sickness affects people differently. A worker may need to take different amounts of sick leave depending on their pregnancy.

### Recording pregnancy-related sickness

Employers should record pregnancy-related absence separately from other sickness absence. They should not count them towards any review or trigger points in the absence policy.

[Find out more about absence trigger points](#)

### Starting maternity leave early due to sickness

Maternity leave starts automatically if someone is off work because of a pregnancy-related sickness. This will happen if they are off work during the 4 weeks before the week the baby is due.

Maternity leave starts the day after someone's first day off sick.

For example, Adi is pregnant and it is 2 weeks before their baby is due. Adi is sick on Monday. The sickness is related to their pregnancy. Adi's maternity leave starts on Tuesday.

Once maternity leave starts, employers must pay someone maternity pay instead of sick pay, if they are eligible.

[Find out about maternity pay](#)

## Support during a difficult pregnancy

A worker who is having a difficult pregnancy which is affecting their work should talk with their employer.

An employer should be understanding towards the worker. The worker might be having physical or mental health problems due to their pregnancy.

An employer and worker might consider:

- different work start and finish times
- the option to do some work from home
- extra breaks if a worker is feeling unwell
- an occupational health assessment, for example to see if a chair can be adjusted for back pain

A worker could also get advice and support from their health and safety representative, if they have one. They could talk to their trade union representative, if they're a member.

## Supporting mental health

Mental health problems are very common in pregnancy.

Antenatal depression is a form of depression that can happen during pregnancy. It is sometimes called prenatal depression.

Find out more about:

- [supporting mental health at work](#)
- [depression in pregnancy on the NHS website](#)

## If there's a stillbirth or miscarriage

A worker does not have to tell their employer they've had a miscarriage. But if they feel able to tell them, the employer can offer support. This could include time off.

If someone has a stillbirth or the baby dies after 24 weeks, they should tell their employer. They may be entitled to maternity leave or pay.

You can also find help and support from the [Miscarriage Association](#).

[Find out more about time off after a stillbirth or miscarriage](#)

## Raising a problem

If someone has a problem at work related to their pregnancy, they can raise it informally first. They can do this by [talking with their employer](#).

If they've already tried to resolve things informally, they can [raise a grievance](#). This is where someone makes 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.

The type of claim someone can make depends on their employment status.

Someone with the [legal status of employee](#) can make an employment tribunal claim for:

- detriment
- unfair dismissal
- discrimination

Someone who does not have the legal status of employee can only make a claim for discrimination.

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, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).