Managers Guide to Maternity Leave

**Introduction**

This guide is designed to help you support your employee through their pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.

Please read Liverpool Hope University’s Maternity Policy and related documentation alongside this guide.

**Before Maternity Leave**

Your employee must inform you (and HR) by the 15th week before the baby is due (approximately 25 weeks pregnant) in order to qualify for maternity leave and pay.

The employee is protected from unfair treatment connected with their pregnancy as soon as they have notified the University.

**Antenatal Classes**

Employees are entitled to have paid time off to attend appointments for antenatal care, including reasonable time for relaxation and parentcraft classes. As for other medical appointments, staff are asked, where possible, to arrange appointments at times which cause the minimum disruption to work. For all appointments, confirmation letters/cards/texts should be shown to the line manager.

**Risk Assessment**

When an employee has formally confirmed they are pregnant, you should familiarise yourself with the [Code of Practice for New and Expectant Mothers](https://www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/staffgateway/governance/healthandsafetydocuments/New%20and%20Expectant%20Mothers%20Code%20of%20Practice%C3%A2.pdf). You should then carry out a risk assessment, which should be documented, and a copy sent to HR. Highlighted actions should be addressed and further help or assistance is available from HR.

**Probation Period**

If an employee is still in probation when maternity leave commences, the probation period will pause and re-commence when the employee returns from maternity leave.

**Performance Review**

You should carry out a review of current targets before the employee goes on maternity leave and agree a date for reviewing/setting new targets when they return.

**Communication**

Agree with your employee what kind of contact you will have during the leave period. For example, do they want to be kept updated regarding changes at work and if so, how, eg by email, letter etc..

**Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days**

[Keeping in touch](https://www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/staffgateway/personneldocuments/media%2C38123%2Cen.docx) days are intended to help employees on maternity leave with the process of resuming work and to maintain contact during leave.

KIT days are optional and the decision to undertake a KIT day must be agreed between you and your employee (there are no rights for either employer or employee to require such days).

Speak to your employee before they commence maternity leave to make sure they are aware of their right to KIT days.

**Annual Leave**

Discuss with your employee how they wish to use their annual leave prior to and after the maternity leave period. Speak to your HR Manager for information on outstanding leave and further advice on this.

**During Maternity Leave**

If the baby is born early, please ensure HR have also been made aware of this as it can have implications regarding payroll and agreed dates.

Once maternity leave has started, it is important that you maintain the agreed contact with your employee. Employees on maternity leave should be updated on any formal changes that may be happening in their team or the University. You should also invite them to any social events your team is having – they may not wish to attend but it’s good to be invited!

**Planning for the return to work**

You should know the date your employee is due to return to work – and if this date changes, please make sure HR are aware.

As the return date approaches, your employee may start to think about the possibility of returning on reduced or changed hours. If this is the case, you will need to signpost them to the [Flexible Working Policy](https://www.hope.ac.uk/media/gateway/staffgateway/personneldocuments/media%2C40844%2Cen.pdf) and process.

**Returning to Work after Maternity Leave**

As the end of maternity leave approaches, it is important to discuss and agree plans for the employee’s return to work.

**Return to work meetings**

Your employee will have been out of the workplace for a considerable amount of time and returning to work can be a daunting process. You may find it useful to create a re-induction programme to cover the first few weeks back at work.

A one to one meeting should be arranged for their first day back after leave and make sure you inform your employee of any changes that have taken place (eg new team members, new offices etc..). At this meeting you could discuss other issues such as the annual leave (making sure it is correct and that they have taken/booked all leave due to them), any requirements for breastfeeding facilities, or, if the employee has reduced/changed their hours, discuss any changes to workload etc..

If the employee is on probation, restart the period and meet with them to reset targets. If they are out of probation, you should conduct a performance review meeting to discuss any ongoing targets or any training requirements they may have.

**Breastfeeding**

If your employee is breastfeeding when she returns, make sure she is aware of the University’s breastfeeding facilities – further advice is available from HR.