

Maternity Leave Policy

Royal Mail Group supports employees to manage their work life balance during and after pregnancy. This policy outlines our maternity leave entitlements and process, and provides details of where to go for more information.

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Getting help

Contact your manager if you have any queries about this policy.

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0845 6060603 / 5456 7100

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0845 6042787 / 5456 4747

For web access go to:
<https://www.psp.royalmailgroup.com>



Maternity Leave Policy

Who does this apply to?

This policy applies to all employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, unless stated otherwise. This policy does not apply to agency staff, contractors or self-employed workers. 'Royal Mail Group Ltd' will be referred to as 'Royal Mail Group'.

This policy is effective from 28 April 2012.

This policy does not form part of contracts of employment. Royal Mail Group reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

The policy

Royal Mail Group recognises that motherhood brings additional responsibilities. It aims to provide support to new mothers employed by Royal Mail Group in combining their career and family responsibilities. Royal Mail Group values the contributions of all our employees and encourages employees to return to work after maternity leave.

Expectations **Our expectations of managers**

- Managers of all grades are responsible for handling maternity leave cases for their employees, ensuring there is clear communication about the agreed maternity arrangements and that PSP is kept up to date
- Managers are responsible for supporting new mothers before and during their pregnancy, and on their return to work.

Eligibility for maternity leave and pay

All pregnant employees, regardless of length of service, are eligible for 52 weeks maternity leave, which includes the first 26 weeks as Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and the next 26 weeks as Additional Maternity Leave (AML).

OML may start at any time from the eleventh week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). However, the employee must provide notice of their intention to take maternity leave by the fifteenth week before their EWC. AML begins the day after OML.

All employees must take a minimum of two weeks compulsory maternity leave, which starts on the day of childbirth.

Statutory Maternity Pay is the 39 weeks of state maternity pay paid to eligible employees by Royal Mail Group.

A summary of maternity leave entitlement and associated pay are outlined in the table below. Details of benefits during maternity leave can be found in the Maternity Guide.

Length of service	Maternity leave		Maternity pay	
	Ordinary leave	Additional leave	Royal Mail enhanced pay	Statutory pay
52 weeks or more of continuous service in 15 th week before expected week of childbirth	26 weeks ordinary leave	26 weeks additional leave	Weeks 1-26 at full pay*	Weeks 27 – 39 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** or 90% average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser
26 to 52 weeks of continuous service in 15 th week before the expected week of childbirth	26 weeks ordinary leave	26 weeks additional leave	Not eligible	Weeks 1-39 Statutory Maternity Pay** or 90% average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser
Less than 26 weeks of continuous service in 15 th week before the expected week of childbirth	26 weeks ordinary leave	26 weeks additional leave	Not eligible	Not eligible Possibility to claim maternity allowance *** Weeks 1-39 or 90% average weekly earnings whichever is the lesser
<p>Notes</p> <p>*Except when statutory pay is more than full pay. Employees with over 52 weeks' service at the start of their maternity leave and who qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) will also be entitled to RMG enhanced pay.</p> <p>**If an employee's average earnings in the eight weeks prior to the start of the qualifying period are below the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions then they will not qualify for any SMP. Employees with over 26 weeks but less than 52 week service 15 weeks before their expected week of childbirth will not be entitled to RMG but may qualify for SMP</p> <p>***If employee does not qualify for SMP from Royal Mail Group, HR Services will send them Form SMP1, which should be sent with the MATB1 to their local Department of Work and Pensions office. The Department of Work and Pensions will decide whether they are entitled to a maternity allowance. Employees with less than 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before their expected week of childbirth are not entitlement to SMP or RMG pay, but may be entitled to MA</p>				

Ante-natal appointments

During their pregnancy, an employee has the right to paid time off work to attend any antenatal appointment that has been recommended by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse.

Managers may ask employees to provide an appointment card or other document confirming that they have made an appointment to receive antenatal care.

How to apply for maternity leave

Applications for maternity leave should be submitted to the manager using the Request for Maternity Leave form (available on the Policy and Information site on PSP), at least 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. All applications must include a proposed maternity leave start date and the length of time maternity leave is required.

OML can start any time after the beginning of the 11th week before the EWC (unless

the child is born prematurely before that date) and:

- On the employee's chosen date; or
- The day after the employee gives birth

If the employee gives birth before their maternity leave was due to start, they must notify their manager in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the pregnant employee is absent from work for a pregnancy-related illness in the four weeks before their EWC, maternity leave will start the day after their first day of absence.

The application must be supported by a MATB1 Form, which is a certificate of pregnancy issued by a registered GP or a certified midwife, stating the expected date of childbirth.

Changes to start dates

The date provided can be changed, providing the employee gives notice in writing of the new date, either 28 days before the date originally notified, or 28 days before the new start date of their maternity leave; whichever falls earlier. Where this is not possible, notice of the change of start date should be submitted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

See the Maternity Leave Guide for details of what managers need to action on PSP.

Returning to work

Where a return date has not been agreed, the default expectation is that the employee will take their full entitlement to 52 weeks leave. Where a return date has been agreed, should the employee decide to return to work earlier or later than proposed, they are required to give their manager eight weeks' notice, (using the Return to Work form available on PSP).

Employees returning from Ordinary Maternity Leave have the right to return to the same job held prior to their leave. Employees returning after Additional Maternity Leave have the right to return to the same job unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. If this is the case, employees will still have the right to return to a similar job which is suitable and appropriate in the circumstances.

For employees who are planning to transfer any of their maternity leave to their partner, please see the Shared Parental Leave Policy and Guide.

Keeping in touch days

An employee on maternity leave can complete up to ten days of paid work for Royal Mail Group during maternity leave without triggering the end of maternity leave or affecting their entitlement to statutory maternity pay.

Keeping in touch days provide employees with the opportunity to participate in relevant work or training that will allow for a smoother transition back to work. See the Maternity Guide for details.

Where to go for further information

The Getting help box on the front page of this policy tells you where to find further information.

Guidance is also available on the Policy and Information site on PSP and HR policy pages on the intranet (non-PSP users).

In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and the supporting guide, the terms of this policy take precedence.

Forms

The following forms can be found on the Policy and Information site:

- Maternity Leave Request form
- Keeping in Touch form
- Return to Work after Maternity Leave form

Related documents

You may find it useful to read the following documents located on the Policy and Information site in conjunction with this policy:

- Other Time Off (Special Leave) Policy and Guide
- Parental Leave Policy and Guide
- Paternity Leave Policy and Guide
- Shared Parental Leave Policy, Guide and At a Glance Policy Summary
- Annual Holiday Policy and Guide
- Safety and Health Policy
- Being a Parent At a Glance Policy Summary for Employees
- Being a Parent Hints and Tips for Managers