



# Maternity Policy

Version History		
Version	Date of issue	Author
1	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	Julia Brown
2	31 March 2025	Andrea Balogh, HR Manager
Next planned review:	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2026	

## 1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

At PKAVS, we will do all we can to ensure all pregnant employees are given the necessary support and encouragement before, during, and on their return to work from maternity leave.

This policy aims to:

- Support employees to balance work and family life.
- Ensure that the employee's duties are adequately covered during their maternity leave.
- Ensure that open dialogue is implemented at all stages so that employees feel fully informed about the entitlements and the process to follow.
- Maintain contact with employees and support them in their plans to return to work.
- Retain employees and therefore, continue PKAVS as a great place to work.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of PKAVS on all contracts and should be read in conjunction with the paternity, adoption and shared parental leave clauses in the Staff Handbook which provides parents with more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth. (Where this policy refers to 'partner' this is regardless of gender and includes same-sex partners).

## 3. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used within this policy:

**EWC:** The expected week of childbirth is the week, beginning on the Sunday, during which the baby's birth is expected.

**MATB1:** The maternity certificate, or form, which is provided to confirm a pregnancy and confirm the expected week of childbirth.

**Qualifying week:** The 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth

## 4. NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Please notify us as soon as possible of your pregnancy to enable us to ensure that, where appropriate, any reasonable steps are taken to safeguard the safety of yourself and your unborn child and that you are not subject to any unnecessary risks at work.

To qualify for maternity leave please provide us with written notification by the qualifying week, or as soon as reasonably practicable after this, of the following information:

- your pregnancy
- your EWC, and
- the date you wish to start your ordinary maternity leave period, which can be any time from the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC.

There is a form you can use to provide this information which will be provided along with this policy.

Please also give your original MATB1 to your manager. You will normally be provided with this at around the 20-week stage.

## **Notification requirements – continued**

Once you have notified your manager of your intended start date of ordinary maternity leave, we will confirm, in writing, the date that we expect you to return to work after additional maternity leave has ended. This confirmation will be sent to you within 28 days of your notification.

An informal meeting will then be arranged with your manager and the HR Advisor to discuss your entitlements and the organisational processes involved. The meeting will include discussions on the following points:

- the amount of leave you can take and the payment arrangements.
- the information that we will need from you to process your maternity leave.
- time off for ante-natal appointments.
- risk assessments to ensure your role does not pose a risk to your, or your baby's, health, and safety.
- your right to return after maternity leave to the same or a similar role.
- the opportunity to request flexible working and how a request should be made.

To ensure good communication and a smooth transition in the time leading up to maternity leave, and during the leave itself, you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and also for remaining in contact whilst you are on leave. We will also consult you on how to cover your workload during your leave and whether any temporary reporting arrangements need putting in place.

We would like to keep you fully informed of any news or developments at work during your leave and we will continue to send you emails and information on social events etc. We will also keep you informed of any recruitment exercises undertaken during your absence.

## **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

So that we may assess any potential risk that your role poses to your health and safety, and the health and safety of your baby, please notify your manager as soon as you are aware that you are pregnant. A Health and Safety Risk Assessment will be undertaken, and action taken to eliminate any risk. Actions taken may include adjusting your role or, if no adjustments can be identified that will reduce or remove the risk, you will be offered a suitable alternative role for the duration of your pregnancy. If alternative work cannot be found, we reserve the right to place you on suspension on full pay until you are no longer at risk. If necessary, where a risk remains, these arrangements will continue for a period of six months after the birth of your child.

Please speak with your manager immediately if you are worried about your own health and safety at any time.

## **6. TIME OFF FOR ANTE-NATAL CARE**

You are entitled to paid time off during normal working hours to receive ante-natal care. Ante-natal care can include medical examinations, relaxation classes and parent-craft classes as advised by a medical practitioner. Time off will be provided for any time spent travelling to and from these appointments, including any waiting time.

Other than for the first appointment, you may be asked to provide an appointment card to your manager to confirm the details of the appointment.

You will receive full pay for the time taken to attend these appointments.

## 7. LENGTH OF MATERNITY LEAVE

Subject to meeting the notification requirements set out above, you are entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave in total, broken down as follows:

- 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML), including a 2-week period of compulsory maternity leave (or 4 weeks for factory workers)
- 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML) that starts immediately after OML.

Unless you notify us that you wish to take a shorter period, the Company will automatically assume you are taking your full entitlement to 52 weeks and will write to you to confirm your expected return date.

During periods of OML and AML, you remain entitled to receive your normal contractual terms and conditions of employment that you would have received had you not taken this leave, except for remuneration. This will include contractual benefits, subject to the terms of these benefits.

## 8. COMMENCING MATERNITY LEAVE

You can start maternity leave at any time from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC until the date of birth. Please inform us of the date you intend to start leave however you may change this date so long as you provide at least 28 days' notice of this change. Any application for a date change should be made in writing to your manager and there is a form to notify us of this variation which is available with this policy.

Compulsory maternity leave commences on the day after childbirth occurs. Its purpose is to ensure that you have at least a two-week period of leave (or four weeks for factory workers) after the birth of your baby.

There are two incidences in which the maternity leave period is triggered automatically:

- Where childbirth occurs before the OML would otherwise commence. If this occurs, please notify us, in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable after the birth, of the date on which you gave birth. Your maternity leave period will begin automatically on the day following the date of the birth.
- Where you are absent from work, wholly or partly due to your pregnancy, after the beginning of the fourth week before the EWC. If this occurs, please notify us, in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable, that your absence from work is wholly or partly due to your pregnancy and the start date of this absence. In these circumstances, the Company may require that your maternity leave period begins on the day following the first day of such absence.

Once you have notified *[insert job title of person]* that your OML period has been triggered due to premature absence or premature childbirth, we will confirm, in writing, the date that we expect you to return to work after the AML period has ended. This confirmation will be sent to you within 28 days of your notification.

## **9. SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE**

You may be entitled to take shared parental leave and you should refer to our shared parental leave policy for further information on entitlements, eligibility, and notice requirements.

## **10. MATERNITY PAY**

Dependent upon your length of service, you may be entitled to receive statutory maternity pay (SMP). If you do not qualify for such a payment, you may, dependent upon your circumstances, be eligible to receive state maternity allowance. In these circumstances, we will provide you with the form SMP1 within seven days of determining that you do not qualify.

You will qualify for SMP if you meet the following criteria:

- you have been continuously employed with us for at least 26 weeks by the qualifying week.
- your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit relevant for national insurance purposes.
- you are still pregnant at the 11th week before the EWC or have given birth by that time; and,
- you have complied with the relevant notification requirements.

The period for which SMP may be paid is called the maternity pay period. The maternity pay period may start at any time from the start of the 11th week before the EWC and can continue for up to 39 weeks, even if you do not intend to return to work.

Payment will be made at the rate of 90 per cent of your average earnings for the first six weeks of leave and then up to 33 weeks at the Standard Rate of SMP or 90 per cent of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

Your normal weekly earnings are calculated based on an average of your gross earnings for national insurance during the 'relevant period'. This will include, for example, any payments relating to overtime, commission, and bonuses. The 'relevant period' is the period ending on the last normal pay day before the qualifying week and starting with the normal pay day which is at least eight weeks earlier. The exact calculation of weekly earnings will depend on whether you are paid monthly, weekly or at other intervals. Further advice on how your normal weekly earnings will be calculated will be provided by the HR Advisor.

Where your gross earnings are increased by a pay rise, and this increase takes effect from the start of the relevant period and before the end of the AML period, this increase will result in a recalculation of your SMP. As a result of this recalculation, you may be entitled to a retrospective increase or may subsequently qualify to receive SMP.

## **11. KEEPING IN TOUCH DAYS**

You may, by mutual agreement, work for up to 10 days during your maternity leave period (but not during the compulsory maternity leave period) without losing statutory payments for that week or ending your entitlement to leave. Payment for KIT days will be discussed and agreed in advance of these being worked.

For this purpose, any work carried out on any day, even just an hour's work, is deemed to constitute "a day's work". Any days' work done under this provision will not have the effect of extending the total duration of the maternity leave period.

## **12. NEONATAL CARE**

We understand how important it is for parents to be with their newborns, especially when they require medical care. Under the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023, we offer neonatal care leave to support employees during this crucial time.

You may take neonatal care leave if you are the newborn's:

- Parent,
- Partner of the child's mother,
- Intended parent (in the case of surrogacy),
- Child's adopter or prospective adopter,
- Partner of an adopter or prospective adopter.

From your first day of employment, you are entitled to request neonatal care leave if your baby requires hospital care for at least seven consecutive days within the first 28 days after birth.

For every seven full consecutive days your baby spends in neonatal care, you are entitled to one week of leave, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. This leave is in addition to existing entitlements such as maternity, paternity, and shared parental leave.

Employees who have been with PKAVS for at least 26 weeks up to the qualifying week (the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth) and earn at least the Lower Earnings Limit are also eligible for statutory neonatal care pay, which is provided at the same rate as other family-related statutory payments (see paragraph 10 for details).

We are committed to supporting our employees during challenging times! If you have any questions about neonatal care leave, please speak with your Line manager or the HR Team!

## **13. STILLBIRTH AND MISCARRIAGE**

If you experience a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy, you will no longer be entitled to take maternity leave. It is anticipated that an employee may need some time off work in these circumstances, and this will usually be taken as sick leave, during which the organisation's sickness absence policy will apply.

If you suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, your entitlement to maternity leave and pay will not be affected and you will still be able to take the time off, and receive pay, as planned. Parental bereavement leave is also available for employees who suffer a stillbirth. In this event, you'll be provided with information on parental bereavement leave from the HR Advisor.

## **14. HOLIDAYS**

You will continue to accrue holidays while you are on maternity leave. As these holidays cannot be taken while you are on maternity leave, it is important for us to discuss and agree the arrangements for you taking of these holidays after your maternity leave.

## **15. RETURNING TO WORK**

If you return to work at the end of your OML period, you are entitled to return to the same job, with the same terms and conditions, in which you were employed before your absence.

If you return to work after a period of AML, you are entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed before your absence. Where this is not reasonably practicable, you will be entitled to return to a suitable and appropriate job on terms that are no less favourable.

If you are made redundant during maternity leave, you will be offered a suitable alternative role.

Unless you state otherwise, it will be automatically assumed that you will return to work at the end of your full 52 week leave period. So that we may make effective plans for your return, we would be grateful if you would contact us shortly before your return. However, there is no obligation on you to do so unless you wish to change the date of your return, in which case please give us a minimum of eight weeks' notice.

If you qualify for shared parental leave and wish to return early from maternity leave for this purpose, please also give us eight weeks' notice. You can find more information on this in our shared parental leave policy.

You may be invited to attend an informal meeting with your manager to discuss any arrangements regarding your return to work. This is likely to take place approximately two weeks before your return. The following points will be discussed at this meeting:

- any developments that have taken place at work.
- any appropriate training to take place.
- any flexible working arrangements which have been agreed.

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work after your maternity leave, please give us your notice of your resignation in line with your contractual notice period. Your notice period to resign is set out in your contract of employment.

If you are unable to return on the agreed date due to sickness, please inform your manager immediately.

## **16. FLEXIBLE WORKING**

We recognise that employees returning from maternity leave may wish to reduce their working hours or undertake homeworking.

We will make every effort to accommodate requests for part-time working, provided that your duties can still be effectively carried out on such a basis. However, we must also take into account the needs of the service when assessing and granting any requests.

Any flexible working request should be made in line with the process set out in the flexible working policy.

## **17. GRIEVANCE RELATED TO MATERNITY RIGHTS**

The organisation's grievance procedure may be used in the event that you are dissatisfied with any decision made in respect of your maternity rights.

## **18. GENERAL**

### **18.1 ACAS code of practice**

It is the view of PKAVS that this Maternity Policy meets the standards set out within the ACAS code of practice regarding Pregnancy and Maternity.

### **18.2 Review**

This Maternity Policy (and supporting documents) will be reviewed in line with the recognised arrangements at the date outlined on the front cover of this document, or earlier if there is a business or legislative requirement to do so.

### **18.3 Contact details**

For further information on any part of the policy or procedures contained in this document, please contact the Operations, Governance, and Impact Manager at PKAVS at [hr@pkavs.org.uk](mailto:hr@pkavs.org.uk)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Form for employee to request statutory maternity leave.

<b>Please read these notes before completing the form</b>
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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In order for us to process your intention to take maternity leave, we require the information requested on this form. Please complete it in as much detail as possible to enable our smooth processing of your request.</li><li>2. The earliest date you can start maternity leave is the 11<sup>th</sup> week before your expected week of childbirth (EWC).</li><li>3. Unless you state otherwise, we will assume that you will take your full entitlement of 52 weeks' maternity leave. You are able to change your return-to-work date provided you give us at least 8 weeks' notice. This applies whether you simply wish to return to work early or because you qualify for take shared parental leave and wish to take it.</li><li>4. Please return the form as indicated below by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC). If there is a good reason that you cannot return it by this date, please return it as soon as possible after this date.</li></ol> |
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When complete, please return this form to: <a href="mailto:hr@pkavs.org.uk">hr@pkavs.org.uk</a>
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Please also keep a copy for your records.
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EMPLOYEE DETAILS	
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<b>Employee Name:</b>	<b>Employee Job Title:</b>
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<b>Employee Home Address and Postcode:</b>	

<b>Employee email address:</b>

<b>Employee home telephone number</b>

<b>MATERNITY LEAVE DETAILS</b>	
<b>Expected week of childbirth:</b>	
<b>Intended start date of maternity leave:</b>	
<b>Intended return to work date:</b>	
<b>Declaration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I confirm that I am pregnant.</li><li>• I understand that PKAVS may require me to produce a medical certificate (e.g., MATB1) as evidence of my pregnancy and my EWC.</li></ul> <p>Employee signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>	

## Appendix 2

### Risk assessment form for new and expectant mothers

This assessment should be completed by both the pregnant employee and a supervisor; a completed copy should be given to the person subject to this assessment. The assessment may need to be reviewed more than once as the pregnancy or return to work develops. It should always be reviewed at the request of the new and expectant employee.

<b>Employee name:</b>		
<b>Job title:</b>		
<b>Task and or location:</b>		
<b>1 - Movement and posture</b>		<b>Control measures</b>
Does the job involve awkward twisting or stretching	<b>Yes / No</b>	
Does the woman have to stand for periods of, for example more than two-three hours without a break?	<b>Yes / No</b>	
Does she have to sit for periods of more than two-three hours?	<b>Yes / No</b>	
Are there space restrictions (for example, working behind a desk)?	<b>Yes / No</b>	
If yes, will these cause more restricted movement as the pregnancy develops?	<b>Yes / No</b>	
<b>2 - Manual handling</b>		<b>Control measures</b>
Does the job involve twisting, stooping or stretching to lift objects?	<b>Yes / No</b>	
Does the job involve the lifting, pushing or pulling of heavy loads?	<b>Yes / No</b>	

Does the job involve rapid repetitive lifting (even of lighter objects)?	Yes / No	
Does the job involve lifting objects that are difficult to grasp or awkward to hold?	Yes / No	
<b>3 - Hazardous substances – infection risks and chemicals</b>		<b>Control measures</b>
Are there any infection risks in the work? For example: clearing up spilled body fluids or disposing of used syringes.	Yes / No	
Work with raw meats	Yes / No	
If yes to either of the above, are hygiene precautions adequate?	Yes / No	
Are any chemicals used at work known to be of risk to women of childbearing age?	Yes / No	
If yes to above, are pregnant workers kept away from work that could increase exposure?	Yes / No	
<b>4 - Working time</b>		<b>Control measures</b>
Is the woman expected to work long hours or overtime?	Yes / No	
Does she have some flexibility or choice over her working hours?	Yes / No	
Does the work involve very early starts or late finishes?	Yes / No	
Does the work involve night work between the hours of, for example, 11pm to 7am?	Yes / No	
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Name:</b>  <b>Job title:</b>  <b>Date:</b>	

