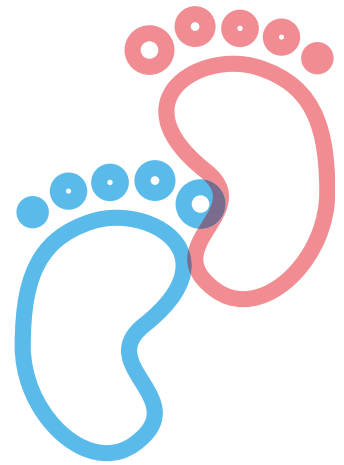


Maternity Leave & Pay

You have the right to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave if you're having a baby and are legally classed as an employee. You have this right from your first day of starting a job.

After the first compulsory 2 or 4 weeks, how many of the 52 weeks you take is up to you.

You get the same amount of maternity leave and pay even if you have more than one baby at once.



When you have a baby, you might be eligible for one of the following:

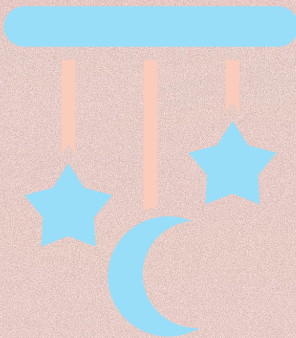
- Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)
- Enhanced ('contractual') maternity pay
- Maternity Allowance

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

Who is eligible for SMP

You get Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if all the following apply:

- you've been working continuously for 26 weeks for the same employer before your 'qualifying week'
- you earn at least £120 a week on average for 8 weeks before your qualifying week



Your qualifying week

You need to work out when your 'qualifying week' is so you know:

- when you need to give notice to your employer to get maternity leave and pay
- whether you'll get either Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance

Tip: To work out your qualifying week, use a calendar to count 15 weeks back from the week you're due to have your baby.

You can also use the [maternity calculator on GOV.UK](#).

If you are not entitled for the SMP you might be eligible to get

Maternity Allowance

A pregnant employee or worker might be eligible for Maternity Allowance, if they cannot get SMP.

Maternity Allowance is paid by the government. It lasts for up to 39 weeks.



Maternity Allowance for 39 weeks

You might get Maternity Allowance for 39 weeks if one of the following applies:

- you're employed, but cannot get Statutory Maternity Pay

In the 66 weeks before your baby's due, you must also have been:

- You must have been employed or self-employed for at least 26 weeks of the test period (66 weeks up to and including the week before your baby is due). It does not matter if these weeks are split up or if they are not all for the same employer.
- earning £30 a week or more in at least 13 weeks - the weeks do not have to be together

How much is Maternity Allowance

Maternity Allowance is £151.97 per week or 90% of your average gross weekly earnings (before tax), whichever is the smaller amount.

You can claim Maternity Allowance 11 weeks before your baby is due.

How to claim Maternity Allowance

You'll need a Maternity Allowance (MA1) claim form from www.gov.uk

You can either:

- print it and fill it in
- fill it in online and print it
- order a form on www.gov.uk if you cannot print it

The form has notes to help you fill it in.

Send it to the address on the form.

Tip: If you have not paid enough Class 2 National Insurance to get the full rate (£151.97 a week), you'll get £27 a week for 39 weeks. You still need to meet all the other eligibility criteria to get this amount.

You may be able to get the full rate by making early National Insurance payments. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will send you a letter to tell you how.



Assistance

What other help is there?

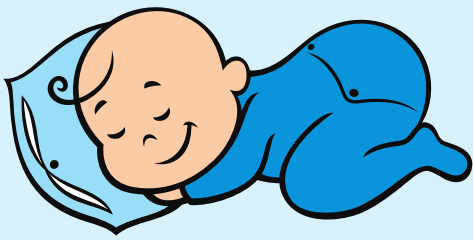
If you are not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay or your contract of employment does not provide Enhanced Maternity pay it can be a daunting time. There is however other help out there:



Other Benefits

In addition to Maternity Allowance which is claimed from the Government, you may be eligible for:

- Universal Credit
- child benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income Support



Check your entitlement here: [Benefits Calculator](#)

Sure Start Maternity Grant

You may be entitled to a £500 grant from the Government. The grant if awarded does not have to be paid back.

Check your eligibility here: [Sure Start Maternity Grant](#)

Healthy Start Vouchers

You may be entitled to claim vouchers for free milk and food.

Check your eligibility here: [Healthy Start Vouchers](#)

Other Help

If your family is experiencing hardship there are a number of charities supporting new parents.

- Ask your GP/social worker/health visitor for a referral to a baby bank, or google for banks in your local area that don't require a referral.

Baby Banks provide clothing, equipment, bedding, nappies, toiletries to families in need.

Nappies can represent a huge cost, check out 'nappy libraries' for rental washable cloth nappies: [UK Nappy Network](#)



Key Dates

It will seem that there is a lot to do before the baby comes, and there are lots of dates and forms to keep track of for work, this guide is intended to provide a reminder of those dates:

Congratulations you have found out you are expecting! People are often nervous about announcing their pregnancy too soon, however, you need to ensure that you tell your employer that you are expecting no later than the 15th week before your baby is due (around week 25 of your pregnancy)

- 20 weeks pregnant: Doctor can issue MATB1 form
- Before the 25th week inform the employer you are pregnant and provide:
 - MATB1 form
 - Date baby is due
 - Date you wish to start your maternity leave

If by this date, you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks and earn at least £120 per week and have given the right notice, you will be eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

- If you are not eligible for SMP your employer must inform you within 7 days and provide you with an SMP1 form
- Your employer must respond in 28 days to confirm the date your maternity leave will run to
- You have the right to paid time off to attend antenatal appointments during your pregnancy
- If you are off sick whilst you are pregnant you are entitled to SSP (Statutory Sick Pay)
- the earliest you can start your leave is 11 weeks before the baby is due
- If you want to change the date you start your Maternity Leave you must give 4 weeks notice
- If you are off sick with pregnancy-related illness in the 4 weeks before your due date your maternity leave will start early
- After your baby is born, if you haven't started your maternity leave you must do so by law, there is a minimum period of 2 weeks that you must take, this is compulsory maternity leave.
- Statutory Maternity Leave is 52 weeks: 26 weeks: Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks: Additional Maternity Leave
- You can take as much leave up to 52 weeks as you like, but no less than 2 weeks.
- If you want to change your return to work date you must provide 8 weeks notice