



# Balancing family and work



**This leaflet is a summary of your rights as a working parent. For more information, contact the Children and Families Information Service on 08457 125 737.**

## Pregnant at work

If you are pregnant, you have the right to paid time off work for antenatal care. This includes relaxation or parent craft classes as long as they are taken on the advice of your midwife or doctor.

Your employer must make sure that your work does not put you or your baby at risk. A risk assessment of your working conditions should be carried out. If risks are found which cannot be removed, your working conditions must be temporarily altered or you should be offered an alternative job. If this is not possible your employer will have to suspend you on full pay.

## Maternity leave and pay

Employees are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave, regardless of length of service or the number of hours you work. The first 26 weeks is called Ordinary Maternity Leave and the next 26 weeks is called Additional Maternity Leave.

You must give your employer notice of your maternity leave by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due. Tell them that you are pregnant, the expected week of childbirth and the date you wish to start your maternity leave. Some employers request this in writing.

If you qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay it will be paid for 39 weeks. This is made up of 90% of your average earnings a week for the first 6 weeks followed by up to £128.73 for the next 33 weeks. You do not receive any money during the last 13 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave.

To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you must have 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due. This means that as long as you started the job before you became pregnant and you have worked for at least one day or part of a day every week, then you will qualify.

## Maternity allowance

If you don't qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you may be able to get Maternity Allowance. This is paid directly to you by Jobcentre Plus. It is paid for 39 weeks at a rate of £128.73 or 90% of your average earnings per week, depending on which is less. To qualify you must have worked for at least 26 weeks during the 66 weeks before your baby is due. This does not have to be continuous or with the same employer but you must have earned at least £30 a week for at least 13 of the weeks.

## Paternity leave

If a father has worked for an employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due and earned at least £102 a week (before tax) he is entitled to take two weeks off work following the birth of his child.

Paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth. Fathers must give their employer notice by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due stating when the baby is expected to be born, whether one or two weeks are being taken, when they want the leave to start and if they want to receive Statutory Paternity Pay. Payments will be £128.73 a week, or 90% of average earnings if this is less.



## Parental leave

You are entitled to take 13 weeks unpaid leave up until your child's 5th birthday. If your child has a disability you are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave up until the child's 18th birthday.

This entitlement is to allow you to spend time with your child and achieve a better work-life balance. To be eligible you must have worked for your employer for at least 12 months.

Some employers have their own rules for parental leave. If not, a Fallback Scheme automatically applies. This scheme states the legal minimum which is:

- Parental leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week or more, unless your child is entitled to Disability Living Allowance, in which case parental leave can be taken by the day.
- A maximum of 4 weeks a year per eligible child may be taken by each parent.
- You must give your employer at least 21 days notice in writing stating when you wish to take parental leave.
- The employer can postpone your parental leave for up to 6 months if it means the business would be disrupted.

## Time off for emergencies

All employees have the right to take unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you.

An emergency is defined as when someone who depends on you is ill and needs your help, is injured or assaulted, goes into labour or if there is a breakdown in care, such as a childminder being unable to work or a nurse not turning up.

Your employer may have their own dependency leave scheme, which pays you (like being on sick leave) but this is not a legal requirement. There will be a limit on the number of paid days which can be taken in any one leave year.

## Flexible working

If your child is under 6 (or 18 if they are disabled) and you have worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks, you can apply for flexible working.

Options include:

- **Part-time** – anything less than the full-time hours normally worked in a week at your workplace.
- **Flexi-time** – you may have to be in work during core hours (for instance 10am-12 noon and 2-4pm). Outside of these times you can choose when you want to work and build up a bank of hours (often up to a fixed amount each month) that can be taken as time off.
- **Job Sharing** – two people carry out a job that would normally be done by one. Each person is employed on a part-time basis but together they cover a full-time post.
- **Term-time Working** – you work during school-term time and take unpaid leave during the holidays. You can spread your salary equally over the year to receive a regular amount every month.





- **School Hours Working** – you work during school hours which means you can drop the children off at school and collect them at the end of the day.
- **Staggered Hours** – Staggered hours are where you and your workplace colleagues have different start, finish and break times, allowing your employer to cover longer opening hours. It is essentially a shift system.
- **Compressed Hours** – you work more hours over fewer days, for example, 10 hours a day Monday to Thursday with Friday off.
- **Working from Home** – depending on the job you do, you work from home for all or some days.
- **Structured time off in lieu** – Is where you agree to work longer hours during periods of peak activity or demand. These extra hours are recorded and you can then take the time off (with pay) at a less busy time.

You have to make a request for flexible working in writing. Your employer has to take it into consideration and they can only say 'no' if there is a clear business reason to back it up.

For more information please contact:

**Children and Families Information Service,  
Children's Services, 80 Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1DU**

**T: 08457 125 737**

**E: [childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk)**

**[www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis.asp](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis.asp)**

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 01228 606060.

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请致电 01228 606060

Jeigu norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba,  
skambinkite telefonu 01228 606060

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer 01228 606060

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua,  
telefone para o 01228 606060

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01228 606060 numaralı telefonu arayınız

