# General Information

## What medical appointments are routine during pregnancy?

In the UK women have 8-10 different medical appointments during a routine pregnancy, including ultrasound scans at ~12 weeks and ~20 weeks pregnant. The 12-week scan is used to date the pregnancy, check the baby is developing and has a heartbeat, and if requested, screen for Down’s syndrome. Although they may have known they are pregnant for some time, it is common to wait until after the 12-week scan to announce a pregnancy to family, friends, and colleagues. The 20-week scan is a detailed ultrasound which checks that the baby is developing and looks for rare conditions such as cleft lip and cardiac abnormalities. At the first midwife appointment after the 20-week scan, the midwife issues a MAT B1 form, which provides medical evidence of the pregnancy and the baby’s due date.

Other appointments will generally be with a midwife or consultant, and will be used to monitor the general health of the pregnant woman. Health during pregnancy can be impacted by a range of conditions, and additional medical appointments may be recommended by the midwife/consultant to monitor mother and child.

## What employment rights do pregnant women have?

In the UK a woman’s right to attend maternity medical appointments, to take maternity leave, and to receive payment during maternity leave are all protected.

A summary of these policies can be found in [Maternity Frequently Asked Questions.](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/worklife/leave/matpol/mattoolkit/matfaqs/#idon’twantmylinemanagertoknowiamexpectingababyatthemomentbutihavelotsofquestionsandwouldliketotalktosomeone%2Cwhocanispeakto%3F)

For more in-depth information, please see the University’s [Maternity Leave Policy](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/worklife/leave/matpol/maternityleavepolicy/).

# Maternity Advice for Line Managers

This section contains advice for line managers on supporting pregnant employees and ensuring they have a safe work environment. It also suggests actions the line manager can take to ensure a smooth transition between pregnancy, maternity leave, and return to work, for both the employee and their colleagues.

## When an employee tells you she is pregnant

Conversations around pregnancy can be emotional for both employee and manager. When an employee announces they are pregnant, initial conversations should centre around their health and safety at work, and answering any concerns they may have. At this stage it is also important to establish whether they have told other colleagues about the pregnancy, or whether it should be considered confidential.

### Initial steps:

* Have a gentle discussion about what stage the pregnancy is at, the baby’s approximate due date, and whether there are upcoming medical appointments.
* Perform a risk assessment as soon as possible using the University [risk assessment form](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_142356_en.doc). An example of a risk assessment completed in MC&SB is available [here](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_828633_smxx.pdf). Further health and safety guidance is available [here.](https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/biology/athenaswan/maternitypaternityfamily/)
* If the risk assessment identifies duties which are now considered hazardous to health (such as working with radioisotopes), discuss how this work can be avoided or allocated to a different member of staff.
* Explain that if there are aspects of the pregnancy the employee is not comfortable discussing with their line manager (such as medical information which could affect the pregnancy), additional support is available from [Human Resources](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/contact/#collegeofmedical%2Cveterinary%26lifesciences).

## During the pregnancy

Regular conversations between the employee and line manager can help ensure a supportive and productive environment.

### As soon as possible:

The line manager should consider how best to manage employee maternity leave. The duration and start date of maternity leave is decided by the employee, but there may be several options available for maternity cover. This will usually depend on the type of position, type of contract, and how the role is funded.

* For employees on open ended contracts this is likely to involve advertising the position for secondment or a fixed term contract.
* For staff on contracts with a funding end date or fixed term contracts, the options available will be determined by the length of contract remaining and how the post is funded.
* For researchers (such as RAs and technicians) it may be possible to put the research on hold during maternity leave and extend their contract on return. This option is likely to be impacted by whether there are other staff members on the same funding stream. In some circumstances it may be easier to recruit fixed-term maternity cover to the post.

Where appropriate, the options available should be discussed with the relevant funding body, [TRM Team](https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/biology/contact/), and [People and Organisational Development](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/contact/#d.en.503125,recruitment) as soon as possible. When discussing maternity leave/cover, it is advisable to copy both the TRM Project Co-ordinator and People and Organisational Development Adviser into e-mails, to ensure they both have access to the same information. Recruiting maternity cover usually takes several months, and should be planned with consideration to factors which can slow the process further (such as downtime over Christmas). Where the employee is funded by an external source (such as a funding body) they will usually expect to be informed of the pregnancy and any staffing changes or alterations to the duration of the grant. Similarly, it can take time to have these changes approved, so it is beneficial to start the process as soon as possible.

### Additional issues to consider:

* Staff on maternity leave receive Enhanced Maternity Pay, which exceeds the statutory Government maternity pay. Discuss with your TRM Project Co-ordinator how the EMP will be funded.
* If the pregnant employee is on a fixed term contract which elapses before the due date, alert the TRM Project Co-ordinator and People and Organisational Development as soon as possible, so the employee receives all support possible.

### Items to discuss with the pregnant staff member:

* The MAT B1 form is usually issued at the first midwife appointment after the 20-week scan. It should be submitted to People and Organisational Development as medical evidence of the pregnancy as soon as possible (and no later than the end of the qualifying week, the 15th week before the estimated week of childbirth).
* The maternity leave start date and duration are submitted on the HR Self Service Portal, where the maternity payment scheme can also be selected. The maternity start date can subsequently be altered if required.
* The University has a [shared parental leave policy](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/worklife/leave/sharedparentalleave/) which allows maternity leave/standard maternity pay to be shared between both parents.
* Annual leave can be taken to push the maternity start date back. People and Organisational Development can advise on options regarding annual leave.
* Update the staff member on the available options for maternity cover/funding extensions due to employee maternity leave. It is worth considering handover arrangements, and any additional training other members of staff will require.
* Check whether there have been changes to the job role/environment which require the risk assessment form to be revised and updated.
* Ensure that the employee has supplied an up-to-date contact number for whomever they would like contacted in a medical emergency.

## In the weeks preceding the start of maternity leave

Babies often arrive before the due date, so it is important not to leave important discussions right to the end of the pregnancy. It is to the benefit of the employee’s colleagues if a thorough handover is performed.

### Items to discuss with the pregnant staff member:

* If the employee is absent from work due to any pregnancy related illness during the four week period prior to the expected week of childbirth, maternity leave will automatically commence.
* If their role is being fulfilled by another staff member, they should update that staff member on the status of their current work. Additionally they should ensure access to any computer files required. If they work in a research role, they should ensure colleagues know where their materials and consumables are stored.
* Ascertain how the staff member would prefer to be contacted during their maternity leave. This could be by e-mail, text message, or phone call, but should be respectful of the fact that the employee is on leave.
* Remind the staff member of the availability of KIT (keeping in touch) days, which allow the employee to work for up to ten days during their maternity leave. KIT days are voluntary, and must be agreed with the line manager. For KIT days, maternity pay is ‘topped up’ by salary to the level of normal pay.
* If the employee would like to alter their working hours/pattern on return from maternity, they should look at the University’s [Flexible Working Policy](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/worklife/flexibleworking/) for further details.

## During maternity leave

* Confirm to the TRM Team and People and Organisational Development that the staff member has started maternity leave. This will ensure appropriate payment of maternity pay, and accurate calculation of employee return date.
* Keep queries about work matters to a minimum. Remember that the staff member is on leave, and may find it stressful if they are regularly contacted.
* Remind the staff member that if they are considering changing their return-to-work date, or applying for changes to their work hours/pattern, you are happy to discuss this with them. There are time restrictions on when these applications should be submitted. Applications for flexible working should be given strong consideration, and the local TRM and People and Organisational Development teams can advise how to adapt the job role/funding.
* If relevant, remind the employee of the University’s Academic Returners and Research Support Scheme. This scheme allows female academics returning from maternity leave to apply for up to £10,000 to support the individual’s research activity. For more information, see the Academic Returners and Research [Support Policy and Framework](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_394373_smxx.pdf).
* Towards the end of maternity leave, it may be helpful to update the staff member on significant changes to the work environment – such as new colleagues who have joined the team, or changes within the department.

## On employee return to work

Return to work after maternity leave can be a difficult time for an employee. They may experience anxiety due to separation from their child, as well as returning to a work environment which has altered in their absence.

* Try to meet with the returning employee in their first few days back at work, to welcome them back and update them on:
  + changes to staffing
  + changes to their aims or responsibilities
  + changes to their workload, if they have altered their work hours
  + new software or methods of work they will be introduced to
* If the staff member requires additional training, identify a colleague whom they can shadow.
* Remind the employee of the University’s [policy](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/all/worklife/leave/emergencytimeoff/) on emergency time off to care for dependants.
* Discuss whether an updated Risk Assessment is required – such as if the employee is still breastfeeding. Remind the employee of the availability of a dedicated [breastfeeding room](https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/lifesciences/athenaswan/breastfeedingmenopauseroom/), which is available for life sciences staff.
* Encourage the employee to discuss with you any issues or struggles they are having adapting to being back at work.