

MATERNITY LEAVE & PAY

This policy sets out the maternity provisions to which all female Search Associates are entitled, both before and after the birth of a child.

Search Associates may also be entitled to take Shared Parental Leave either in addition to or instead of maternity leave. Please see the Shared Parental Leave policy for more information.

Time off for Ante-Natal Care

Search Associates are entitled to take reasonable, paid time off during assignment to receive ante natal care.

Search Associates should inform their Search Consultant of the fact that they are pregnant, and produce the appointment card.

Where possible, appointments should be arranged at the start or end of the working day.

STATUTORY MATERNITY LEAVE

Compulsory Maternity Leave

Compulsory leave is a health and safety provision, intended to fall within Ordinary Maternity Leave, which prohibits a woman from returning to work within 2 weeks of the birth.

Ordinary Maternity Leave

To qualify for ordinary Maternity Leave, the Search Associate should, where possible, no later than the 15th week before her expected week of childbirth (EWC), advise the organisation of:

- The fact that she is pregnant
- The week her baby is expected to be born. The company will require that this be confirmed with a medical certificate (MATB1 form)
- The date on which the Search Associate wishes to commence Maternity Leave

The Search Associate may choose the date on which she wishes ordinary maternity leave to commence, subject to the following:

- The Search Associate cannot take ordinary Maternity Leave earlier than the 11th week prior to the expected week of confinement
- Where the Search Associate is absent from work due to illness caused by the pregnancy at any time during the four weeks before the start of her EWC, ordinary maternity leave will automatically start on the first day of absence

The Search Associate may change her mind about when she wishes to start her leave provided that she tells the company at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

On being notified of a Search Associate's intention to take Maternity Leave, the company will write to her, within 28 days of the notification, advising of the date that she is expected to return to work should the Search Associate take her full entitlement (including her entitlement to additional Maternity Leave).

Search Associates are entitled to the benefits of their normal terms and conditions (other than remuneration) during ordinary Maternity Leave. In particular, Search Associates will continue to accrue annual holiday entitlement, will retain any right to use company cars/mobile phones that have been allocated to them and pension contributions will be made based upon maternity pay.

Additional Maternity Leave

Additional Maternity Leave commences at the end of the ordinary maternity leave period and continues for an additional 26 weeks.

There is no qualifying period of employment to gain entitlement to additional Maternity Leave.

No additional notice is required from Search Associates who qualify for additional Maternity Leave. A Search Associate who returns to work at the end of her full Maternity Leave period need not notify the organisation in advance of her return. If however the Search Associate wishes to return to work prior to the end of the full Maternity Leave period, she must give 8 weeks' notice. Note that Search Associates may not return to work earlier than two weeks after the birth of the child (or four weeks where the Search Associate works in a factory).

During additional Maternity Leave, Search Associate's remain employed under their terms and conditions of employment and are entitled to the benefits of their normal terms and conditions other than remuneration. In particular, Search Associates will continue to accrue contractual annual holiday entitlement and will retain any right to use company cars/mobile phones that have been allocated to them.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

In order to qualify for SMP, a Search Associate must:

- Have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before her EWC
- Be pregnant and have reached the 11th week prior to the expected week of childbirth
- Have normal weekly earnings of not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Contributions
- Have given at least 28 days' notice to the organisation that she intends to be absent from work due to pregnancy

SMP is payable for a 39 week period. The first six weeks are paid at 90% of normal weekly earnings. The remaining 33 weeks are paid at the standard SMP rate, or 90% of normal weekly earnings if this is lower than the SMP rate. The remainder is unpaid.

Keeping in Touch

The organisation and the Search Associate are entitled to have a reasonable amount of contact with each other during ordinary and additional maternity leave to discuss aspects such as plans to return to work, important developments at work, promotional opportunities or job vacancies.

The organisation and the Search Associate are also entitled to agree that the Search Associate will attend work for up to 10 days during either ordinary or additional maternity leave without this impacting upon the Search Associates statutory maternity pay. This may allow the Search Associate to attend training or other events that take place during the leave period or allow the Search Associate to keep her skills up to date. Any such 'keeping in touch' days and the payment to be received for attending work on these days will be agreed between the organisation and the Search Associate beforehand.

Adoption Leave and Pay

Search Associates will be entitled to adoption leave and pay in line with current legislation. Full details of Search Associates entitlement is detailed in the Search Associates Adoption Policy.