

UK Maternity cover policies

1. **Duration of Maternity Leave:** Eligible employees in the UK are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave. This is divided into two parts: Ordinary Maternity Leave (the first 26 weeks) and Additional Maternity Leave (the remaining 26 weeks).
2. **Maternity Pay:** Eligible employees can receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks. SMP is paid at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks, followed by £151.97 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the remaining 33 weeks.
3. **Job Protection:** Pregnant employees have the right to return to the same job after Ordinary Maternity Leave. If they take Additional Maternity Leave, they are entitled to return to the same job unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case they should be offered a suitable alternative role.
4. **Health and Safety:** Employers must conduct risk assessments to ensure the health and safety of pregnant employees and make necessary adjustments to their working conditions if required.
5. **Flexible Working Arrangements:** Employers must consider requests for flexible working arrangements from employees returning from maternity leave, including part-time work or changes to working hours.
6. **Breastfeeding Support:** Employers should provide facilities and breaks to allow breastfeeding or expressing milk upon the return to work. This includes providing a private space and adequate break times for expressing milk.
7. **Parental Leave:** In addition to maternity leave, eligible employees may also take shared parental leave, allowing parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay.
8. **Non-Discrimination:** Employers must not discriminate against employees based on pregnancy or maternity leave. This includes decisions regarding hiring, promotion, training, or dismissal.
9. **Communication and Information:** Employers should communicate maternity leave policies clearly to all employees and provide necessary information and support to those taking maternity leave.

10. Documentation Requirements: Employers may require documentation, such as medical certificates, to verify the pregnancy and the need for maternity leave.

These policies are based on the statutory entitlements provided under UK law and are subject to change, so it's essential for employers to stay updated with the latest regulations and guidelines. Additionally, seeking advice from legal experts or human resources professionals can ensure compliance with maternity leave policies in the UK.