



Royal Air Force New Parent Pack

# **Supporting your Staff during Pregnancy**

A Guide for Line Managers

v3

**The contents of this booklet are intended to simplify the procedure and entitlements of maternity arrangements and are for guidance only.**

The following guidelines do not overrule policy in any way.

Please contact [Air-COSPers-Del-ParentWillbg@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Air-COSPers-Del-ParentWillbg@mod.gov.uk) for amendments or updates.

## A member of staff has told me they are pregnant – What do I need to do first?



You may have already gone over a few of these points in your initial discussion, but have a look just in case you have not covered something:

- Respect her desire for confidentiality, particularly where the pregnancy is at an early stage. Ask who knows and who doesn't. Be led by her and when she wants to tell other members of the team.
- Ask if there are any recommendations from her health professional regarding work and carry out a Health & Safety Risk Assessment (see para below).
- Discuss any workplace adjustments, such as access to rest facilities if needed.
- Set up a date for an initial meeting to discuss dates for ante-natal appointments such as scans, tests and thoughts on maternity leave dates.
- Educate yourself on the maternity leave and pay package (later in this leaflet) so that you understand entitlements to leave and pay. This will help you both work through any questions you have together.

## How do I complete the Health & Safety Risk Assessment?



As a line manager you are responsible for assessing the risks to the health and safety of personnel at work, including that of pregnant service personnel. Your workplace should already have a general risk assessment, but you should work together to carry out a specific one for her pregnancy as soon as she tells you.

Detailed guidance on health and safety matters relevant to new and expectant mothers is set out in [JSP 375](#) (Volume 2, Leaflet 36, MOD Form 5010). A [Risk Assessment Form 5010](#) is to be completed. The specific risk assessment should include factors you already know about from the general risk assessment, e.g. handling certain chemicals, as well as anything raised by the servicewoman, their doctor or midwife.

If you identify risks, you must take the following steps to remove these risks:

- Temporarily alter the working conditions or hours of work. If this is not reasonable or would not avoid the risk, then:
- Offer suitable alternative work if available. This could be in the wider Sqn, Wg or Stn if no suitable work

can be found within her own section. If this is not feasible, then:

- Grant Additional Leave During Pregnancy ([JSP 760](#), Chapter 24) for as long as is necessary to protect her health and safety and that of her child.

After the initial risk assessment and any adjustment to working routines, it is good practice to work together to ensure that the changes are in fact removing the risks identified.

A risk assessment is a continuous process and must be reviewed at regular intervals as the servicewoman's pregnancy progresses, but especially at the following points:

- If there is any change to her work activity.
- If there are any complications with her pregnancy.
- Upon her return to work if it is within 6 months of giving birth.
- If still breastfeeding after her return to work.

## What facilities do I need to make available?



You should ensure that suitable rest facilities are made available for expectant mothers and where necessary should provide appropriate facilities to lie down. This could be by making an office available when needed, making her aware of a Quiet Room (also sometimes called Breastfeeding rooms) on station. A list of dedicated rooms across the MOD estate is available [Here](#), although this does not stop you identifying a suitable room in the workplace.

## What does the servicewoman need to do that I need to be aware of?



To enable you as a line manager to offer guidance and assistance, an outline of the actions a servicewoman should take to complete her maternity routine is given below:

- **See a military doctor.** Even if they are a reservist and not normally entitled to service medical care, every pregnant servicewoman must be seen by the Unit Medical Centre. This is to enable her JMES to be adjusted to take into account any occupational restrictions. Initially she will not be given a pregnancy related JMES, this will be done later. This appointment is to protect her and her unborn child from any occupational hazards.

- **Attend ante-natal appointments** – See ‘Time off for ante-natal appointments’ para below.

- **Order maternity uniform through the MyRAF App.** Maternity uniform is designed to be worn from a point when standard uniform becomes uncomfortable therefore it should be ordered in ahead of time. You should take a pragmatic view to the footwear worn as it is often the case that a woman’s feet may swell up during pregnancy, making the wearing of service issue shoes impractical.

- **Support career management discussions.** A servicewoman will have to notify her career manager of the pregnancy especially if she is due to deploy. Although this does not have to happen until the 15th week before her Expected Week of Childbirth the earlier she tells them, the sooner plans can be discussed. This can be a difficult time as many will not know what their future career aspirations will be. You should give support in arranging any meetings and offer to talk through the discussions had afterwards if they want to.

- **Formally inform you that she is pregnant.** It is a legal requirement for the servicewoman to inform you and her career manager and commanding officer in writing of her pregnancy by the 15th week before her Expected Week of Childbirth. This is usually done by sending a copy of her MAT1B form which is given to her by her midwife on or after the 20th week of pregnancy. It also needs to be sent to the HR Centre or Unit HR.

- **Complete a Maternity Notice Form.** Once the HR Centre or Unit HR receive the MAT1B they will send a Maternity Notice Form to the servicewoman. On pregnancy there are 2 options available. A servicewoman can opt to return to work after a period of maternity leave or exercise her right to take a special option to leave on pregnancy. See para below for more detail. Each option has its own form.

For subsequent appointments you can, if you wish, request proof of the appointment. You cannot unreasonably refuse paid time off for antenatal care or require her to “make-up” the time spent at appointments. Travel and subsistence cannot be claimed for antenatal appointments. The leave is claimed using [JPA R001](#) and sent to the HR Centre or Unit HR for processing.

## Time off for antenatal appointments



Pregnant women are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal care once they have told their line manager of the pregnancy. This includes time spent travelling to the appointment and waiting to be seen. Antenatal care can include scans and meetings with the midwife, as well as relaxation and parent craft classes. The appointment for care must relate to her pregnancy and have been made on the advice of a GP, nurse or midwife. No proof is required for a first appointment.

## Understanding maternity leave and pay

The first thing that you need to be aware of is that there are a few key dates from which all leave and pay are calculated from.



### Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)

It begins on the Sunday before the due date and ends on the Saturday after. If the date is on a Sunday, the EWC begins on the same day.

### Qualifying Week

This is the week that entitlement to statutory pay or maternity allowance is worked out from. It is 15 weeks before the first day of the EWC.

### Intended date to start maternity leave

This may not be known yet, but it will become a key date as all the calculations for the end of leave and pay are taken from this date.

**Did you know** – maternity leave and pay are separate entitlements? Every pregnant servicewoman is entitled to maternity leave, but not everyone is entitled to maternity pay.

## Maternity leave

It doesn't matter how long they have been in the Service, every servicewoman can take up to 52 weeks maternity leave.



Those 52 weeks are broken down into 2 periods:

- Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) is weeks 1 – 26 inclusive.
- Additional Maternity Leave (AML) is weeks 27 – 52 inclusive.

The names don't really mean anything in terms of leave. Nothing changes in their time off entitlement. The difference is down to the legal protection afforded to returning to your old job which changes slightly at the 26-week point. Up to 26 weeks you can return to your old job. After 26 weeks the service will endeavour to meet the service woman's employment and geographical preferences.

The first two weeks of maternity leave after the birth are compulsory. It is a legal requirement that she does not work during this time.

## Maternity pay



Maternity pay is more complex than leave and depends on a number of factors including length of service, commitment type and intentions on returning to work at the end of the leave period. The information below is based on straight forward circumstances. If your staff member has a more complex situation or requires further clarification [JSP 760 – Leave Regulations](#) should be referred to as well as having a discussion with your HR Centre or Unit HR.

There are 2 parts to maternity pay, the bit that the Government pays which is called Statutory Maternity Pay, and the bit that the RAF pays, which is called Occupational Pay.

- **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** – This is the Government allowance that is paid for the first 39 weeks of maternity leave. If she qualifies for SMP it will be paid through the service woman's pay and is subject to her normal tax and National Insurance deductions.
- The first six weeks of SMP will be paid at 90% of average weekly earnings (including RRP) before tax.
- The remaining 33 weeks will be paid at the lower of either the standard rate of SMP or 90% of average weekly earnings.

Average Weekly Earnings are calculated in accordance with the Governments [employer's guidance](#). The current rate of SMP is published [Here](#).

- **Occupational pay** – This is the RAF pay which is paid for the first 26 weeks of maternity leave. Occupational pay tops up the SMP to the normal pay rate. Entitlement to occupational pay is explained in the table below. So, in terms of money received, what gets paid into the bank is the same, but it is made up of SMP and occupational pay.
- **No pay** – Weeks 40-52 (inclusive) are unpaid.



## Post maternity leave options

It is important that you have knowledge of the 2 options available.



### Option 1

Return to work after a period of maternity leave.

It is up to her how much of her 52 weeks of maternity leave that she wants to take. She needs to notify the RAF of the date she chooses using the Maternity Notice Form [JPA R004](#).

### Option 2

Exercise a special right to leave the RAF prematurely on the grounds of pregnancy.

Servicewomen choosing this option are strongly advised to seek advice from HR staff so that she knows the effects this may have on her maternity entitlements, pay and pension.

A servicewoman may opt to leave under these special terms at any time up to her return to work but should normally give sufficient notice to allow for discharge procedures.

To elect for Option 2 Maternity Notice Form [JPA R005](#) should be completed.

## What if she wants to change her leave plans?



A servicewoman can change her plans by giving 56 days-notice in writing.

If she has exercised her right to leave on grounds of pregnancy and wants to withdraw that notice, then she must complete Form [JPA R004](#) and email it to her HR Centre or Unit HR who will forward onto career management. There is no automatic right to withdraw notice to leave, but every effort will be made to retain her where possible.

If she has been in receipt of occupational pay and then decides to amend her leaving date from the Service so that she would leave without completing the required Return of Service, she should be aware that she will be required to repay the occupational pay received (not the statutory pay element).

## What Plans need to put in place before the start of maternity leave?

### Keeping In Touch (KIT) Plan

The Service is allowed to have reasonable contact with servicewomen whilst they are on maternity



leave. It is the responsibility of the servicewoman to put in place a Keeping in Touch (KIT) Plan with you before she goes on leave. Between you, you should schedule time to discuss the plan and how she would like to keep in touch with you, and you with her.

You should also discuss any opportunities for using KIT days (suggestions below). It is ok if she doesn't know what to do with them right away but cover them in the discussion as you may know of opportunities coming up that she may not be aware of. You may also want to take the opportunity get a date in the diary that falls towards the end of her maternity leave to discuss her return to work and if needed putting a breastfeeding plan in place.

**Note** – there is a planner at the end of the servicewoman's 'Managing your Pregnancy and Maternity' booklet for writing a KIT plan down. You should keep a copy and ensure it is passed on to your replacement if you are assigned during her leave period.

## Keeping In Touch (KIT) Days



KIT days are designed to enable servicewomen on maternity leave to keep up to date with new developments in the workplace and undertake training without bringing to an end her maternity leave.

She gets 10 KIT days, and it is up to her how many she wants to use. The only caveat is that they cannot be taken during the first two weeks following childbirth.

KIT days are reckonable service and, if she is not in receipt of occupational pay, she will be paid a full day's pay, even if she is keeping in touch for part of a day. KIT days do not have to be a full day's work, uniform does not have to be worn and they do not have to be taken at the workplace.

Examples of KIT days include:

- Office briefings.
- Service briefings such as Armed Forces Pension Society.
- Branch/Trade conferences.
- Meetings with career managers or line managers.
- Courses.
- Discussing a breastfeeding plan with their line manager.
- Representative sport.
- Conducting personal service-related admin.
- Researching new posts/units prior to assignment.
- Attend work for a few hours while baby has a trial day at nursery.

This is not an exclusive list; any activity that a servicewoman wishes to undertake as part of her personal or professional development, or which support her transition back to work should be encouraged.

## How to Claim a KIT Day



Form [JPA R003](#) is to be used and can be submitted as a single form for each day or all of them on one form. All that is needed detail of the KIT Day and for it to be signed by you, their Chain of Command or the organiser of the event. It is then emailed to the relevant HR Centre or Unit HR.

## Appraisal Reports



The RAF is committed to ensuring that Servicewomen are not discriminated against, or treated any less favourably, as a result of pregnancy or maternity. As a period of maternity leave can mean that the Servicewoman is out of the work environment for up to 52 weeks, an appraisal report (AR) is to be provided for any pregnant Servicewoman commencing maternity leave. This will be done by either deferring or bringing forward her AR; this is to ensure that any reporting gaps are kept to a minimum, and that any promotion board held in her absence will have the most recent possible report to consider. Further details are in [JSP 757](#). Don't forget that pregnancy or maternity leave MUST NOT be commented on in a SJAR/OJAR.

## Pregnancy and operational deployment



When a Servicewoman's pregnancy is confirmed, JMES reclassification will render her non-deployable. If she is already deployed when the pregnancy is confirmed, the Medical Officer (MO) will conduct a clinical risk assessment which in most cases (nearly all operational deployments) will result in the Servicewoman being returned to the UK with the award of a non-deployable code. Exceptionally, where it can be demonstrated that clinical risk is acceptable, a limited deployable JMES may be awarded allowing for the return to the UK to be deferred to a later stage of the pregnancy. Even if there appears to be adequate antenatal care there may be insufficient obstetric care to cope with any potential complications, or premature births. The clinical risk assessment may, therefore, advise relocation on neonatal grounds before the Servicewoman reaches the 22 weeks' gestation point.

## Service Families Accommodation (SFA)



If Married/Registered in a civil partnership and their Personal Status Category (PStat) reflects this on JPA they will be able to apply for SFA at any point.

If they are single, they will be entitled to SFA prior to the birth. At 6 months pregnant they must apply to change their PStat by e mailing [JPAN001](#) to their HR Centre or Unit HR, once completed they are then able to make an application for SFA.

Applications for SFA are made using the [e1132 form](#) (for security reasons it does not work on the Internet). More information is available through Pinnacle at [www.pinnacleservicefamilies.co.uk](http://www.pinnacleservicefamilies.co.uk).

## Returning to work after maternity leave



This can be an apprehensive time; it can be hard to leave a child in childcare, colleagues and line management may have moved on, or she may have general concerns with settling back into RAF life. It is your responsibility as her line manager to discuss a returning to work plan with her. This may include a graduated return to work using KIT days whilst she is still on maternity leave or annual leave. If she has returned to work, you may also be able to agree a flexible working pattern. Bear in mind that not only may a servicewoman be returning from an extended period away from the workplace, she may also be returning to a new job in a new location while settling her family into a new home and routine.

## Flexible working arrangements



Flexible working arrangements allow an individual to have a degree of freedom when attempting to balance their work and personal life. While flexible working is not a right, all service personnel are entitled to request a flexible working arrangement so they may better balance the demands of personal life and their Service commitments.

Flexible working does not just mean variable start and finish times; there are a number of options available.

The booklet [Flexible Working and You](#) outlines everything you need to know.

## Breastfeeding on return to work



Like all other employees in the UK, servicewomen have a responsibility to plan for their return to work and inform you and their medical officer of their intention to continue to breastfeed. Ideally, this should be done 6-8 weeks prior to their return.

They are encouraged to use a KIT day to have a meeting with you to put into place Breast Feeding Plan and agree any provisions. At the meeting requested provisions should be discussed, and a [JSP 375 Form 5010](#) Risk Assessment completed between just as it was during pregnancy.

Further information on breastfeeding in the workplace is available in [JSP 661 Section 5](#) (internal link).

## Screening from operational deployment



Servicewomen are screened for a period of 18 months post childbirth unless they notify their Career Manager that they are willing to deploy sooner.

## RAF Fitness Test



Anyone returning from a period of maternity leave is given a 6-month grace period before having to take the RAFFT. The exemption runs from the end of maternity leave (this does not include any annual leave added onto the end of maternity leave). This is an administrative exemption applied by the HR Centre and unit PTIs. It is no longer administered using a medical downgrade.

## Parental Leave



This is a government provision so available to all parents. It allows additional leave to care for a child by, for example, spending more time with the child during the early years, to settle a child into new childcare arrangements or to accompany a child during a stay in hospital. Parental Leave allows each parent of each child to take 18 weeks unpaid leave. Parental Leave can be taken up to the child's 18th birthday. Parental Leave is unpaid and, therefore, is non-reckonable service.

## **Pregnancy Loss and Child Bereavement**

This information is for both Regular and Reserve personnel.

If you are made aware of pregnancy loss or still birth, you should encourage the Servicewoman or her partner contact her medical centre to let them know if they have not already done so. Although the information will be shared by the NHS it can sometimes take time. We do not want a delay in providing support.

### **Pregnancy Loss before 24 weeks**

If a servicewoman has a miscarriage or if she has to terminate her pregnancy before the 25th week she will not be entitled to maternity leave or pay. Sick leave may be offered by the MO. If she doesn't want to take sick leave, then she doesn't have to. As a line manager you are able to authorise a period of Compassionate Leave ([JSP 760 Chapter 22](#)).

### **Stillbirth and loss of a child**

If the baby is stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy, is born alive and dies soon after or there is a need to terminate the pregnancy after 24 weeks, maternity leave and pay entitlements remain in place. It is up to the servicewoman whether she changes her plans. She does not need to make a decision immediately but will need to let the MO know as soon as she is able so that her physical and mental wellbeing can be monitored, and referrals made if needed.

Commanding Officers should award compassionate leave for the death of a child. This is specifically covered in [JSP 760 Chapter 22](#).

