



# MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

## About

This policy provides information to employees of the Fire Authority on maternity leave and pay entitlements.

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## 2 PURPOSE

**2.1** Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) are committed to maintaining a healthy, safe and supportive working environment for everyone, including pregnant employees and their unborn children. We know that maternity leave is an important period of time. While its primary purpose is to give you time to recover from the birth, more importantly it also allows you time to care for, and bond with, your baby. It is recognised that expectant, new and nursing employees require practical and emotional support during pregnancy and maternity periods. We will treat you in a way that is sensitive and supportive to your circumstances and ensure that you are treated fairly.

**2.2** Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (“the Service”) are committed to ensuring all policies treat their employees equally regardless of their age, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, disability or sexual orientation.

**2.3** We encourage you to return to work after maternity leave and will support you, making every effort to accommodate flexible working where this meets both your needs and business requirements.

### 2.4 Roles and responsibilities

You will:	We (your manager) will:
<p>Inform your manager as soon as possible that you are pregnant. Inform your manager of any further advice or recommendations suggested by GP or midwife regarding the pregnancy and update this information as pregnancy develops. Liaise with manager in the creation of a reasonable and meaningful modified duties programme.</p> <p>Liaise with manager to ensure they are kept up to date with developments and progress.</p> <p>On receiving a MAT B1 certificate from your midwife or person responsible for your antenatal care, forward to HR.</p> <p>Advise your line manager and HR at least 15 weeks before your baby is due. This should be returned together with your MAT B1 certificate.</p> <p>Commence Maternity leave.</p>	<p>Respect the confidentiality of your staff upon receiving notification that she is pregnant. Complete appropriate individual risk assessment and review periodically. Liaise with employee in the creation of a reasonable and meaningful modified duties programme.</p> <p>Ensure your staff member receives appropriate maternity uniform in a timely manner.</p> <p>Liaise with your staff member to ensure they are kept up to date with developments and progress throughout the pregnancy and the duration of the maternity leave.</p> <p>Agree with staff member about KIT days whilst they are on maternity leave.</p>

<p>Attend agreed KIT days.</p> <p>Contact manager 8 weeks prior to the maternity leave end date, to discuss options for returning to work, including if a flexible working request is to be submitted. Ensure a reasonable and practical return to work programme.</p> <p>Complete flexible working request if required.</p>	<p>Advise HR of agreed KIT days to be worked.</p> <p>Discuss options for returning to work with staff member 8 weeks prior to maternity leave end date. Ensure a reasonable and practical return to work programme.</p> <p>Confirm return to work details and notify HR.</p>
<p><b>Human Resources will:</b></p>	<p><b>Occupational Health will:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend meetings between you and your manager if needed. You may invite a work companion or your Trade Union representative if desired.</li> <li>• Provide guidance and support to your manager</li> <li>• Discuss options for your return to work with your manager prior to the maternity leave end date.</li> <li>• Record the details of the maternity leave</li> <li>• Write to you to confirm the details of your maternity leave</li> <li>• Ensure the correct payments are made (inc for KIT days if appropriate).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice related to pregnancy</li> <li>• Provide advice and assessments in medical fitness for returning to work</li> </ul>

### 3 SCOPE

3.1 This policy is compliant with both green and grey book terms and conditions and applies to all pregnant employees, new mothers and those who have given birth or miscarried in the previous six months, and those women who choose to return to work whilst breast feeding and also, where applicable, to partners of expectant or new mothers.

3.2 Please refer to the Toolkit for additional support and Annex A – Definitions at the end of this document.

## **4 POLICY PROCEDURE**

### **4.1 Giving notice of pregnancy**

You are encouraged to inform your manager as soon as you know you are pregnant. We understand that if you are operational, you may be required to disclose your pregnancy earlier than you may usually choose to. We will ensure confidentiality is maintained with the exception of HR and Occupational Health who need to be notified.

To be eligible for maternity leave, you must comply with the notification periods as outlined below.

You must give your manager the following information, in writing, no later than the end of the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth (EWC), unless this is not reasonably practicable (e.g. you didn't know you were pregnant):

- the expected date on which your baby is due
- your intention to take maternity leave
- the date on which you intend your maternity leave to start (which cannot be earlier than the 11th week before the EWC)
- the EWC on a MAT B1 certificate. This certificate is normally issued during or shortly after the 21st week of your pregnancy

On receipt of your MAT B1, your manager/HR will discuss with you to confirm:

- the start date for your maternity leave
- whether you intend to return to work at the end of your maternity leave (although this may not yet be known)
- the date you are expected to return to work
- your maternity leave and pay entitlement

If you change your mind about the date you plan to start your maternity leave, you should aim to provide as much notice as possible of the change, but, at the very least, you must provide 28 days' notice.

### **4.2 Health and Safety risk assessments during pregnancy**

Once you have notified your manager of your pregnancy, an individual risk assessment must be carried out to identify any changes that may be necessary to protect your health and the health of your unborn baby. This should be re-visited at regular points throughout the pregnancy to ensure that it is still current.

There should already be a generic risk assessment in place to identify hazards in the workplace that could present a risk to any new, expectant or breastfeeding employees which should be reviewed periodically.

A meeting will be convened with you, your manager and an HR representative (although there is no right to be accompanied by a work companion or Trade Union representative, no reasonable request would be denied if desired). See Toolkit for further guidance on the risk assessment meeting.

You will remain principally established to your substantive work location or department while pregnant. If an individual risk assessment identifies a significant risk to either you or your unborn child which cannot be removed, you may be temporarily redeployed away from your normal workplace (this can also be considered upon your request). If this is the case, then you will be redeployed to suitable alternative work with no less favourable terms and conditions.

You will not normally be required to participate in operational training or drills, however, any decisions will be based on a discussion between you and your manager and appropriate risk assessments. If it is determined that you would benefit from training, a specific risk assessment can be conducted to assess which drills you can take part in and if control measures can be implemented to make drills safe for participation. Consideration will be taken of differences in each trimester.

In some cases, temporary flexible working or reduced hours, without loss of pay, may be considered if this is deemed necessary on medical grounds. Any changes to your working arrangements will only be implemented following consultation with Occupational Health, and with agreement with your manager and HR.

In exceptional circumstances, if it is not possible to alter working conditions to remove the risks to your health or the health of your unborn child and no suitable alternative work or modified duties are available, then you may have to refrain from work until the risk is eliminated. In some rare cases this may be for the remainder of the pregnancy, up to the commencement of maternity leave.

You should not unreasonably refuse an offer of suitable alternative employment if it is available.

If you are required to refrain from work under these circumstances, your employment will continue during this period with no affect to your maternity rights. You will also remain entitled to your normal salary and contractual benefits during this period, unless you have unreasonably refused an offer of suitable alternative employment.

### **4.3 Antenatal care**

If you have, on medical advice, made an appointment to receive antenatal care (including antenatal and parent classes where it is not practical to attend outside your normal working hours), you will be given paid time off to keep the appointment. You will not be asked to provide evidence of the first appointment, but you may be asked to produce evidence of any subsequent appointments made.

If you are a partner of an expectant employee, you have a statutory right to take unpaid time off work to attend up to 2 antenatal appointments.

### **4.4 Uniform & Corporate Workwear**

Maternity wear will be discussed in the initial meeting and plans arranged to be fitted, sourced and supplied for both uniformed staff and those required to wear corporate work wear. Following the initial meeting, a request for maternity uniform should be made via this link (to be confirmed). Please see toolkit for further guidance.

In exceptional circumstances, if the maternity uniform is unsuitable or unavailable, alternative arrangements may be considered. Following the initial meeting, a request for maternity uniform should be made. If the maternity uniform is unsuitable or unavailable, you may purchase it yourself and claim the cost back.

### **4.5 Maternity leave**

You are entitled to 52 weeks' statutory maternity leave, regardless of your length of service. This is a single continuous period and is made up of:

26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML), followed immediately by  
26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML)

You must provide your MAT B1 form when received from your midwife which should be at the 21<sup>st</sup> week of pregnancy. This will detail your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

You must take a minimum of 2 weeks' maternity leave immediately after childbirth.

### **4.6 Timing of maternity leave**

You may begin your maternity leave at any time from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC and not later than the day following the actual date of the baby's birth. Sickness absence may also trigger the start of your maternity leave.

If you give birth before the expected date, or before you have had the opportunity to notify your line manager of a date, your maternity leave period will start automatically on the day

after childbirth. You must notify your manager as soon as reasonably practicable of the date of birth of your child, as well as the original expected date of birth.

You must inform your manager and HR by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due, when you wish your maternity pay and leave (both Ordinary Maternity Leave and/or Additional Maternity Leave) to start.

You may change the start or end date of your maternity leave and pay by giving your manager and HR 28 days' notice.

Please see toolkit for a summary table of key dates.

#### 4.7 Maternity Pay

Any entitlement to either statutory or occupational maternity pay will depend on you meeting the relevant eligibility criteria.

All maternity payments will cease on the expiration of 39 weeks and the remaining maternity leave period (up to 52 weeks) is unpaid.

The Maternity Pay Period (MPP) starts on the date that maternity leave starts.

The following table explains the eligibility for SMP and CMP and how it is paid:

	Length of service	Statutory Pay (SMP or MA)	Contractual Pay (repayable if you do not return for 3 months).	Contractual pay not repayable
Pay more than lower earnings limit NI on pay	Less than 26 weeks service at 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	N/A May be eligible to claim Maternity Allowance.	N/A	N/A
	Less than 1 year, but more than 26 weeks service at 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	6 weeks at 90% followed by 33 weeks @ SMP	N/A	N/A
	More than 1 year service at 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	6 weeks @ 90% followed by 33 weeks @ lower rate SMP	26 weeks full pay (SMP will be "topped up" to normal contractual pay for 26 weeks (Followed by 13 weeks SMP)	N/A
Pay less than lower earnings limit NI on pay (may apply to on call staff or part timers)	Less than 1 year service at 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC.	N/A May be eligible to claim Maternity Allowance.	N/A	N/A
	More than 1 year service at 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	N/A May be eligible to claim Maternity Allowance.	The equivalent of further 6 weeks normal salary, paid between week 7 and week 39.	6 weeks at 90%

#### 4.8 Statutory maternity pay (SMP)

If you meet the relevant statutory qualifying conditions, you are entitled to a period of statutory maternity pay (SMP). SMP is given to employees who:



- Have at least 26 weeks continuous service at the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC.
- Are still pregnant at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC or have given birth.
- Have average weekly earnings, for the 8-week period ending with the qualifying week, of not less than the Lower Earnings Limit for NI contributions (you can find out the current limit from Payroll Section)
- Provide proper notification.

Statutory maternity pay is paid for 39 weeks. This is made up of 6 weeks at 9/10<sup>th</sup> (90%) of a normal or average weeks' pay followed by 33 weeks at the appropriate rate (usually lower) of SMP. SMP is calculated on a weekly basis and paid monthly. (Check your eligibility here <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>).

Your average weekly earnings will be based on all your actual gross earnings that are subject to National Insurance contributions in the 8 week period before the qualifying week (15<sup>th</sup> week before EWC). Therefore, your earnings can include holiday pay, overtime, bonuses, arrears of pay or other sums paid during the SMP calculation period on which National Insurance contributions are paid. Allowances (eg. essential car users allowance or FDS), that are included in your gross earnings and are subject to tax and Class 1 National Insurance contributions also count as earnings.

If you become eligible for a pay rise between the start of the original calculation period and the end of your maternity leave (whether ordinary or additional maternity leave), the higher or standard rate of SMP will be recalculated/increased to take account of your pay rise, regardless of whether SMP has already been paid. You will be paid a lump sum to make up any difference between SMP already paid and the amount payable as a result of the pay rise.

SMP will not be paid if you:

- are in legal custody during that period or
- work for another employer **after** the birth but still during your Maternity Pay Period

#### **4.9 Maternity Allowance (MA)**

If you are not entitled to statutory maternity pay you may be eligible for maternity allowance for a period of up to 39 weeks, provided you have stopped working (to take maternity leave). To qualify you must have been employed in at least 26 of the 66 week period ending with the week before the expected week of childbirth. Your gross earnings must be at least £30 a week averaged over a 13 week period.

You will need to ask your local Jobcentre Plus for advice about claiming this.

#### **4.10 Contractual Maternity Pay (CMP)**

If you have more than one year's continuous service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth, meet the eligibility requirements for SMP and intend to return to work you will be entitled to CMP which is:

26 weeks of full pay – this will include the statutory entitlement to 39 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay which will be “topped up” to your normal contractual pay for 26 weeks - followed by 13 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay.

Payment will be at the normal contractual rate of pay that you received before the start of your maternity leave, including any applicable allowances.

For on call employees, maternity pay will be based on your average pay, including regularly worked overtime, over the last 8 weeks prior to the qualifying week.

The sum of SMP (or Maternity allowance) and CMP will NOT exceed normal pay.

To benefit from this enhanced contractual maternity pay, you must return to work and carry out your full role and associated duties for a minimum of 3 months. This period is based on your existing hours or a proportionately extended period should you return on reduced hours. If this condition is not met, the CMP must be repaid. If it is repaid in a different tax year from when the pay was received, you should reclaim the tax and National Insurance paid from HMRC.

Please note that for any subsequent pregnancy, that prevents you returning to work for a minimum of 3 months and complying with the above provision, maternity pay will only be paid at the SMP rate.

If you have less than one year's continuous service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth or you **do not intend to return to work** you will not be entitled to CMP.

If you are uncertain whether you will return or not, you can delay receiving CMP until you are certain that you will return. You can choose to receive CMP during maternity leave or as a lump sum payment on your return.

#### **4.11 Premature births**

If you give birth prematurely (more than 3 weeks prior to EWC), the period of full pay will be extended by the number of weeks the baby was premature and leave will start automatically on the day after childbirth. You must notify your manager of the actual date of childbirth as soon as is reasonably practicable after the birth.

#### **4.12 Stillbirths, miscarriages, termination and neonatal deaths**

We recognise that this will be a traumatic experience for those affected and we will provide relevant support or assistance where needed. Please contact HR for further support and read the toolkit for more guidance.

If you have a miscarriage or termination or still birth before 24 weeks, you should notify your manager and HR as soon as possible. Sympathetic consideration will be given to the situation and paid special leave (compassionate leave) may be granted should this be required. This period of time may be varied based on your individual circumstances and medical advice.

If you have a stillbirth, termination or neonatal death (the baby is born alive but later sadly dies) after 24 weeks of pregnancy, you are entitled to take maternity leave and your partner can take paternity leave. You may also be eligible for maternity or paternity pay.

Please see Parental Bereavement Leave for further information.

#### **4.13 Surrogacy**

There are currently no statutory rights to leave or pay for employees who become parents through surrogacy until a parental or adoption order has been agreed. Please see toolkit for further information.

#### **4.14 Fertility Treatment**

We recognise the physical and emotional effects that fertility treatment can cause and we are committed to ensuring you are fully supported during this period. You should inform your manager or HR as early as possible so that appropriate support can be provided.

There is no statutory right for you to receive time off for fertility treatment. However, as part of our commitment to you, we will consider requests for leave for IVF or other fertility treatment as detailed below. All requests for leave are subject to management approval. To qualify for paid leave for fertility treatment, you must meet the below criteria:

- A minimum of 12 months continuous service
- No less than four weeks notification to the line manager of the dates of fertility treatment.
- Documentary evidence from a relevant GP or Specialist.

Up to 3 days paid leave per fertility treatment cycle may be provided to receive/recover from IVF treatment. Leave can only be taken during the treatment cycle and for this purpose only. It cannot be carried over to a further cycle.

If your partner is receiving fertility treatment, you may apply for 1 full paid day fertility leave per fertility treatment cycle. This only applies if the treatment falls on a scheduled working day.

See Toolkit for further details.

#### **4.15 Sick absence**

If, during pregnancy, you are unfit for work, the normal provisions for sickness absence will apply although any pregnancy-related absences will not count towards reduced sick pay calculations or sickness absence consideration trigger points.

If your pregnancy ends before the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> week, the first 2 weeks of any related sickness absence will not count towards consideration trigger points or pay action under the attendance management procedure (this is known as the “protected period”).

Pregnancy-related sickness will automatically trigger Ordinary Maternity Leave if it occurs within 4 weeks of start of EWC.

Once your maternity leave ends, the normal provisions for paid sickness absence will apply and will count towards sickness absence consideration trigger points.

#### **4.16 Terms and conditions during maternity leave**

Provided you comply with the statutory maternity notification procedures, your normal contractual rights and benefits, **excluding pay**, are maintained during the 52 weeks of your maternity leave. There is no entitlement to retain non contractual/pay benefits (during maternity leave) that are provided for work purposes only, for example, a fire car provided for responding to incidents.

Your contract of employment continues throughout both ordinary maternity leave and additional maternity leave, unless either you or the service ends it or it expires (eg a fixed term contract). You will be required to adhere to the standard policies and procedures that apply to all employees, during your absence (including policies such as secondary employment, social media policy).

Both ordinary and additional maternity leave count towards your period of continuous employment for the purposes of entitlement to other statutory employment rights (such as sick leave, maternity pay, annual leave and redundancy).

#### **4.17 Contractual annual leave**

You retain your contractual (pro-rated for part time staff where applicable) entitlement to annual leave throughout the 52 weeks of your maternity leave.

Annual leave cannot be taken during or between ordinary and additional maternity leave; however, you should take any unused accrued annual leave entitlement before your maternity leave begins and/or immediately after (before returning to duty).

Leave entitlement up to the statutory requirement (20 days) must be taken as leave and cannot be substituted as payment in lieu under law. However days may be carried over to the next year if it is not possible to take all accrued leave before the end of the annual leave year.

#### **4.18 Contact and work during maternity leave**

Reasonable contact can take place during the period of maternity leave. You and your manager should agree on the frequency and nature of the contact. You are able to work during the maternity leave period for up to 10 days – known as 'keeping in touch days' (KIT days) without bringing your maternity leave to an end and without losing entitlement to Maternity Pay. There is no obligation for you to work KIT days and the Service are not obliged to offer work. Please see toolkit for further information.

#### **4.19 Returning to work**

If you have complied with the notice requirements, you have a statutory right to return to work following a period of maternity leave (although you are not allowed to return until at least 2 weeks after the birth of your child).

After ordinary maternity leave, you are entitled to return to the job in which you were employed before you started your maternity leave, with the same terms and conditions of service (on no less favourable terms).

After additional maternity leave, you should return to the same job (as above) unless it is not possible (eg because of redundancy or restructuring). In these circumstances, you will be offered an alternative post on no less favourable terms and conditions in line with the relevant policy.

The government is currently proposing to extend this right for up to six months after you return to work to protect you further from redundancy. As a progressive FRS, we have agreed to implement this proposal before it comes into force.

The date on which you return to work will normally be the first working day 52 weeks after your maternity leave began. You will not be protected against dismissal or detriment if you fail to return to work by this date.

You must give at least 8 weeks' notice if you are intending to return to work on a different date to that which was previously agreed (although this cannot be after the end of the 52-week maximum maternity leave period).

Please see "Returning to Work" toolkit for further guidance.

#### **4.20 Breastfeeding**

If you wish to continue to breastfeed on your return to work you should inform your manager or HR when you give notice of your intention to return. If an individual risk assessment reveals a significant risk to your continuing to breastfeed, then modified duties/suitable alternative work will be agreed with you and your manager whilst you continue to breastfeed.

Please see “Returning to Work” toolkit for further guidance.

#### **4.21 Childcare Vouchers**

If you are in receipt of childcare vouchers under a salary sacrifice scheme, you are entitled to continue to receive them during the whole of your maternity leave period. However it should be noted that because the statutory maternity pay (SMP) calculation is based on the amount of salary received during the qualifying period, and the amount of salary sacrificed on childcare vouchers is not included in this calculation, the amount of SMP due to be paid will be reduced. To ensure changes are made prior to the qualifying week, HR and Payroll must be informed of any amendments or cancellations **by the 17<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy**. Please see toolkit for further information.

#### **4.22 Periods of notice**

If you decide to resign while on maternity leave, whether paid or unpaid, you will be required to give the appropriate contractual period of notice.

#### **4.23 Pensions**

Both you and the Service will continue to make contributions to your Pension Scheme during the Maternity Pay Period (MPP). Your contributions will be calculated and deducted according to your actual earnings during your paid maternity leave; employers’ contributions are calculated and paid according to your full contractual salary.

You have the choice whether or not to continue paying contributions for any period of unpaid maternity leave. If you wish to pay contributions for the period, you can notify Payroll at any time during your unpaid maternity leave and no later than 30 days after your return to work. Arrangements for paying these contributions will be made by Payroll in consultation with you and you will be guided by Payroll as to how you can achieve this and the expected cost.

If contributions are not paid, the period of unpaid maternity leave will count as a break in service for pensionable service calculations.

You may wish to seek advice on the impact on your pension before going on maternity leave and discuss your options with HR.

## 5 REVISION HISTORY

<b>Release Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Owner</b>
V1	March 2022	Whole policy revision	HR

## Annex A - Definitions

Acronym	Meaning
Additional Adoption Leave (AAL)	The period of additional adoption leave following OAL (maximum 26 weeks) to which primary adopter is entitled
Additional Maternity Leave (AML)	The additional period of maternity leave (maximum of 26 weeks) following onto OML to which pregnant employees are entitled
Childbirth	Any birth after a pregnancy lasting at least 24 weeks.
Compulsory Maternity Leave	The 2 week period following the birth of the child, during which an employee cannot return to work
Continuous Service	In calculating continuous service for maternity purposes, previous service with a local or public authority may be counted as reckonable service. The Human Resources Department will help to determine continuous service eligibility.
Contractual Adoption/Maternity Pay (CAP/CMP)	This is payable by the Service over and above SMP to employees who have one year's continuous service at the 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC. Employees who qualify but don't pay enough NI contributions to get SMP are also entitled to some CMP. CMP is only payable if the employee returns.
Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)	The week beginning at midnight between Saturday and Sunday, the baby is due (as confirmed on the MATB1).
Keeping in Touch days/Shared Parental Leave in Touch days (KIT/SPLIT days)	Enables the employee to work for up to 10 days during the maternity/adoption leave period (KIT days) and an additional 20 days during shared parental leave (SPLIT days) without maternity/shared parental leave being affected
Lower Earnings Limit (LEL)	The earnings limit for paying National Insurance contributions. The amount is set by government and is reviewed annually. If earnings are less than the lower earnings limit, no National Insurance is paid and therefore no National Insurance benefits such as SMP are received.
Maternity Allowance (MA)	May be payable if the employee does not qualify for SMP
Maternity Support Leave (MSL)	If the partner of parent 1 is not the father, then the employee may be entitled to Maternity Support Leave if they are considered to be the main support for parent 1 and/or carer of the child
Maternity Pay Period (MPP)	This is a period of 39 consecutive weeks starting on the day maternity leave starts.
MATB1	Form from midwife/doctor certifying pregnancy
NJC	National Joint Council Scheme for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and of Conditions of Service (Grey & Green Book)
Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL)	26 week period of adoption leave to which primary adopter is entitled



Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	26 week period of maternity leave to which pregnant employees are entitled. Normal terms and conditions apply (with the exception of pay) during this time. Maternity Leave can start any time after the beginning of the 11 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC.
Parent	Mother/ adopter, father of the child, spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother/ adopter. Both parents must share the main responsibility for the child.
Partner	The baby's father, the expectant employee's spouse or civil partner, in an enduring/long-term relationship with the expectant employee or the intended parent (i.e a surrogacy arrangement)
Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave (PL/MSL)	This is a statutory entitlement to a period of up to 2 weeks leave following the birth or placement of a child.
Premature birth	A birth that takes place more than 3 weeks before the baby is due.
Protected Period	The protected period follows immediately after IVF implantation, at this point the employee is considered to be pregnant. A pregnancy test is usually carried out 2 weeks after implantation, if successful the usual maternity rights apply. Where this is unsuccessful the 'protected period' ends 2 weeks following confirmation the implantation has been unsuccessful.
Qualifying Week (QW)	The QW is the 15th weeks EWC (when the employee is 25 weeks pregnant)
Refrain from work	Also known as Maternity Suspension.
Relevant Period	The 'relevant period' or 'set period' is usually the 8 week period before the QW (usually weeks 17 – 24 of pregnancy) and is used for calculating the actual amount of pay the employee is entitled to during their maternity leave. This will be based on average weekly earnings during this period. The 'relevant period' will also apply for adoption pay calculations.
Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay (SMP/SAP)	Payment is determined by central government, but if eligible, it is paid by the employer to qualifying employees for 39 weeks
Shared Parental Leave (SPL)	A parent can choose to end their maternity/ adoption leave early. The balance of maternity/ adoption leave would then be taken/shared by their partner.
Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)	May be payable to those who are taking shared parental leave if parent 1/adopter 1 chooses to end the maternity/adoption pay period early