

Maternity Leave

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are taking maternity leave.

2. The Principles

The principles of the policy are to:

- support a healthy work / life balance culture at the FC, where employees can take time off for caring responsibilities;
- support the FC's equality and diversity agenda;
- comply with statutory provisions regarding maternity leave and pay; and
- continue your contract of employment and your contractual benefits, with the exception of pay, whilst you are on maternity leave.

3. The Policy

You are entitled to take 52 weeks maternity leave. You can start your leave any time from 11 weeks before your expected week of childbirth (EWC). Your EWC starts on a Sunday and is the week which your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth.

You are legally required to take a minimum of two weeks' maternity leave immediately following the birth of your child. You are required to comply with the notification requirements detailed in [HR Procedure – Maternity Leave](#), in order to be eligible for maternity leave and pay.

A brief overview of maternity pay entitlement, based only on length of service is detailed below.

Length of Service	Type of Maternity Pay	Pay Entitlement
At least one years' paid service by the start of your maternity leave	Contractual Maternity Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26 weeks full pay• 13 weeks at SMP rate as set by the Government (www.directgov.gov.uk), or 90% of your weekly earnings if this is lower 13 week unpaid

At least 26 weeks continuous employment by your 'qualifying week'	Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings • 33 weeks at SMP rate as set by the Government (www.directgov.gov.uk), or 90% of your weekly earnings if this is lower • 13 weeks unpaid
Less than 26 weeks continuous employment by your 'qualifying week'	Maternity Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 weeks special paid leave (full pay) • Maternity allowance as set by the Government and paid through Job Centre Plus

Your 'qualifying week' is 15 weeks before your expected week of childbirth (EWC).

Eligibility to receive contractual or statutory maternity pay is based on a variety of factors including: length of service; contract type and continuity of employment; your intentions following maternity leave; and your average earnings. You must refer to [HR Procedure – Maternity Leave](#) for more detailed information on contractual maternity pay, SMP and maternity allowance.

You may be eligible to curtail your maternity leave and take shared parental leave (SPL) with your partner. For more information on this, please refer to [HR Policy and HR Procedure – Shared Parental Leave](#).

3.1 Your Responsibilities as an Employee

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of and understand this policy and associated procedure;
- discuss your maternity leave plans with your line manager, providing the minimum notice requirements as detailed in the maternity procedure;
- provide your manager with completed maternity leave application form(s);
- manage and take responsibility for the handover of your current work; and
- keep in touch with your manager when on maternity leave.

3.2 Your Responsibilities as a Manager

You are expected to:

- make sure a health and safety risk assessment is carried out for new and expectant mothers who report into you;
- undertake appropriate resource planning when notified of maternity leave;
- send the completed maternity leave application form(s) to your dedicated HR Team for action
- make sure that there is a handover of current work; and

- agree and maintain keep in touch arrangements for those employees taking maternity leave.

3.3 Human Resources Responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- giving advice and guidance on the application of this policy and associated procedure;
- processing applications for maternity leave and maternity pay;
- answering employee's pay queries and keeping personnel and pay records up-to-date; and
- monitoring and reviewing this policy, and associated procedure, in consultation with the FC Trade Unions.