

Maternity Leave

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This policy sets out the statutory and occupational rights and responsibilities of employees who are pregnant or have recently given birth and gives details of the arrangements for notification of pregnancy antenatal care, pregnancy-related illness, and maternity leave and pay.

1.1.2 This policy is here to help you and us plan ahead when you're starting and looking after your family. We want to make sure everything is as clear as possible for you, so you can plan your finances, time off and any support you may need.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees.

1.2.2 This policy will be available in the People folders in the Fewer Better Rules Book

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 The Head of People is accountable for ensuring that this policy is applied correctly.

1.3.2 The People team are involved in delivering the policy.

1.3.3 Line managers are responsible for liaising with the employee in relation to their period of leave, and where necessary arranging cover for the role.

1.3.4 Employees who are applying for maternity leave are responsible for following the process outlined in this policy.

1.4 Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy

Expected week of childbirth (EWC)	The week, starting on a Sunday, in which the doctor/midwife expects the employee to give birth (as stated on the MATB1)
Qualifying week	The 15 th week before the expected week of childbirth
MATB1	The Maternity Certificate that enables the employee to claim Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA)
Occupational maternity pay (OMP)	Occupational maternity pay refers to payment made by Frontline over and above the statutory requirement
Statutory maternity pay (SMP)	SMP refers to the statutory pay requirement for maternity leave for the first 39 weeks of maternity (based on eligibility)

Section 2: Policy and procedures

2.1 Pregnancy

2.1.1 When to tell your manager and the People team that you are pregnant

Although by law you are only required to notify us that you are pregnant and will take maternity leave by the end of the qualifying week, your manager, the People team and you will benefit if you share the news as early as possible before then.

2.1.2 As an employer we have a duty of care to all our employees and early notice will mean your manager will know that you are entitled to paid time off for antenatal care and that particular health and safety rules apply.

2.1.3 To claim maternity leave you should notify Frontline no later than the end of the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth of:

- the fact that you are pregnant;
- the expected week of childbirth (EWC);
- the date when you intend to start taking leave

2.1.4 Your manager will need to plan ahead and make arrangements for covering the period while you are away. You should therefore try and give the People team the earliest possible notice of each the following:

- whether or not you intend to return to work
- if you intend to return to work: the likely date of return
- how you plan to use your annual leave

2.1.5 What documentation you need to supply

You must supply the People team with the following documents:

- MATB1 form or other statement from a registered medical practitioner or a registered midwife, stating the expected week of childbirth.
 - The earliest that this certificate may be issued by your doctor or midwife is 20 weeks before the week in which your baby is due.
 - Failure to produce such a certificate or statement may also result in your statutory maternity pay not being paid
- If your baby is born before the date you intended to begin your maternity leave, written evidence of the baby's date of birth.
- You must also notify the People team and your line manager in writing (email is acceptable) of the actual date of your child's birth, as soon as possible after your baby is born.

2.1.6 If you do not give the required notification for the start of your maternity leave you may lose your right to start maternity leave on your chosen date. Employers are only required to make exceptions to this where it was not reasonably practicable for the notice to have been given any earlier.

2.1.7 If claiming maternity leave but not SMP, you only need to provide a maternity certificate if requested.

2.2 Fertility and IVF Treatment

2.2.1 Telling your manager and People team about your treatment

We recognise that in order to start a family you may need time off to go for IVF/Fertility treatment. When you or your partner has their treatment confirmed let your manager and the People team know as soon as possible to ensure we can support you during this time.

2.2.2 Appointments

If you need go to appointments to prepare for or undergo treatment yourself you are entitled to paid time off to attend these. You can use the flexible working practices, such as core hours (see [Leave and Absence policy](#)) to make time to attend these appointments, however we know that this is not always possible or practical, therefore you'll also have up to five days paid leave to attend these appointments. You should let your manager know of the days in advance.

2.2.3 These days would not count towards your entitlement to sick pay or leave, but you should log these on Cezanne under Other Absence

2.2.4 We know that you may also want to accompany your partner if they are undergoing IVF/fertility treatment. We ask that for these appointments, you make use of the flexible working practices outlined in the [Leave and Absence policy](#). For time off work for partners' appointments outside of this may be taken from annual leave.

2.2.5 Support

We recognise that you may need some extra support during this time and so please do speak to your manager about any support you might need. We also have completely confidential support available through our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) with Care First.

2.3 Antenatal appointments



Legislation alert clause 3.2.1

Employment Rights Act 1996 s.55-57: Right to time off for ante-natal care.

2.3.1 You are entitled to paid time off to attend appointments for antenatal care made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor. No qualifying service is required.

2.3.2 Antenatal care is not restricted to medical examinations. It could, for example, include relaxation classes and parent craft classes as long as these are advised by a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health visitor.

2.3.3 Except for your first appointment, your manager may ask to see evidence of your antenatal appointments, in which case, you must show the following:

- a certificate confirming that you are pregnant. This can be provided by a registered medical practitioner, a registered midwife or a registered health visitor
- an appointment card or some other document showing that an appointment has been made.

2.4 Health and Safety

2.4.1 Risk Assessments

Frontline has a duty to take care of the health and safety of all employees. We are also required to carry out a risk assessment to assess the workplace risks to employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

2.4.2 Adjustments

If applicable, Frontline will provide you with information as to any risks identified in the risk assessment. If the risk assessment reveals that you would be exposed to health hazards in carrying out your normal job duties, Frontline will take such steps as are reasonably necessary to avoid those risks, such as altering your working conditions. In some cases, this may mean offering you suitable alternative work (if available) on terms and conditions that are not substantially less favourable.

2.4.3 Temporary suspension

If it is not possible to alter your working conditions to remove the risks and there is no suitable alternative work available to offer them on a temporary basis, Frontline may suspend you from work on maternity grounds until there are no longer any risks to their health. This may be for the remainder of the pregnancy until the commencement of maternity leave. If you are suspended in these circumstances, your employment will continue during the period of the suspension and it does not in any way affect your statutory or contractual employment and maternity rights. You will be entitled to your normal salary and contractual benefits during the period of suspension, unless you have unreasonably refused an offer of suitable alternative employment.



Legislation alert **clause 2.4.3**

Employment Rights Act 1996 part VII s.66-68: Rights regarding suspension.

ACAS [guidance on suspension](#): An employer should usually only consider suspension from work if there is a workplace risk to an employee who is a new or expectant mother.

2.5 Maternity Leave



Legislation alert **clause 2.5**

Employment Rights Act 1996 part VIII chapter I: Rights regarding maternity leave.

2.5.1 Eligibility

All pregnant employees are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave, or as much of that period as you wish to take, regardless of your length of service.

2.5.2 While it is up to you to decide how much maternity leave you wish to take up to the 52 weeks maximum, you are required to take the first two weeks leave following the birth of your baby. This is known as Compulsory Maternity Leave.

2.5.3 Maternity leave is a single continuous period, made up of 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave. Additional Maternity Leave follows Ordinary Maternity Leave and there must be no gap between the two.

2.5.4 Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)

Ordinary Maternity Leave lasts for 26 weeks and may begin 11 weeks before your expected week of childbirth (EWC), but may begin later. The latest OML can start is the date of birth.

2.5.5 Your contract of employment continues throughout the 26 weeks of OML. During this time, you continue to benefit from the terms and conditions of employment which would have applied to you had you been at work. The only element of your contractual rights that does not continue is your full remuneration.

2.5.6 Maternity related sickness before OML

If you are absent from work due to a pregnancy-related reason after the beginning of the fourth week before the expected week of childbirth, but before the date you have notified, the maternity leave period begins automatically on the day after the first day of your absence.

2.5.7 Additional Maternity Leave (AML)

Additional Maternity Leave (AML) lasts for 26 weeks and, if taken, must follow immediately after OML. There cannot be a gap between the two types of maternity leave.

2.5.8 Your contract of employment continues throughout AML unless either party expressly ends it or it expires. During AML you do not have any statutory entitlement to receive contractual pay. However, if you do any of the limited amounts of work allowed during maternity leave then you will receive full pay for that work (see [section 2.9 Keeping in Touch](#) days).

2.5.9 When maternity leave can start

The maternity leave period normally starts once you have notified your manager and the People team and agreed the intended start date.

2.5.10 This can be no earlier than the 11th week before the EWC date and no later than the date the baby is born or EWC date (whichever is sooner). There are some exceptions to this rule, as set out below:

i) Absence due to childbirth before the intended start date

If your baby is born before the date you have notified (or before you have notified any date) the maternity leave period starts automatically on the day after the date of the birth. This happens even if the birth takes place before the start of the 11th week before the EWC date. In this instance you should let your manager and the People team know the date of childbirth.

ii) Dismissal or resignation before the intended start date

If you resign or are dismissed before the date you have agreed to start your maternity leave, or before you have notified a date, you lose the right to maternity leave, but you will still be eligible for SMP if you are employed after the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.

2.5.11 Changing your maternity start date

You should agree your start date for maternity leave and pay with line manager and the People team following the notification process. Once you have advised the date you want to start your maternity leave, you can change this date as long as you notify your manager and the People team of the new start date by whichever is the earlier of either 28 days before the original start or 28 days before the new date you want to start your leave.

2.5.12 However, if it is not reasonably practicable to give this much notice (for example if the baby is born early and you need to start maternity leave straight away) then you do not have to. In these circumstances you should give as much notice as possible.

2.5.13 People team confirming your maternity leave

Once you've provided the necessary notice of the intended start date of leave and pay, the People team will in turn provide confirmation of your maternity leave plans writing.

2.6 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)



Legislation alert **clause 2.6**

Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 Part XII: Entitlement, liability to pay and rates of payment.

2.6.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for SMP you must:

- be employed by Frontline on the 15th week before of your EWC (qualifying period)
- have more than 26 weeks service at qualifying period
- earn at least £120 a week (before tax) in an 8-week 'relevant period'

2.6.2 You can use the [SMP calculator](#) to check the relevant period and eligibility. Entitlement to SMP does not affect your right to any other maternity payments provided by Frontline but SMP will still count towards any maternity payments we pay you.

2.6.3 Periods of secondment or loans do not affect your entitlement to paid or unpaid maternity leave.

2.6.4 If you are not eligible for SMP and have recently been employed or are self-employed, you may be able to get Maternity Allowance (MA). (See [section 2.7 - Maternity Allowance](#))

2.6.5 How much is SMP

SMP is paid for a continuous period of up to 39 weeks. The April 2021 rate of SMP is 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first six weeks, followed by the lesser of a flat rate of £151.97 a week, or 90% of average weekly earnings for the remaining 33 weeks if that is less than £151.97. The flat rate is subject to review every April.

2.6.6 When does SMP start

You can choose when you want your SMP to start. The earliest date that SMP can start is from the 11th week before your EWC. SMP will start from any day you choose, once you have

stopped work to have your baby, but no later than your EWC date, or the date your baby is born (whichever is sooner)

2.6.7 This means that your SMP should start from the first day of your maternity leave (not including any annual leave you take before your maternity leave)

2.6.8 The start of your SMP will change if:

- your baby is born before the start of the 11th week or before the start of your SMP pay period. If this happens SMP will start from the day following the birth of your baby
- you are absent from work because of your pregnancy at the start of or in the 4 weeks before your baby is due, SMP will start from the day following the first complete day you are off work because of your pregnancy related reason.

2.6.9 If you are entitled to SMP and leave your employment

If you leave employment for any reason after you have qualified for SMP (see eligibility 2.6.1) Frontline will continue to make this payment to you for 39 weeks from the date you left employment.

2.7 Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

2.7.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for OMP you must:

- Have had one year's continuous service at Frontline on the 15th week before of your EWC (qualifying period)
- be employed by Frontline at the beginning of your maternity leave

For example; *if your EWC date is 30th August 2021, the qualifying period is week commencing 17th May 2021 and therefore your employment start date would need to be on or before 17th May 2020 to qualify for OMP. If you started after 17th May 2020 you would not be eligible for OMP but may be eligible for SMP (see table 2.7.5.)*

2.7.2 The qualifying period of one year's paid service could include:

- periods of paid employment within Frontline immediately prior to joining Frontline (for example on a temporary agency contract)
- previous periods of casual service, if these are continuous and joined to permanent service without a break

2.7.3 Periods of secondment or loans do not affect your entitlement to paid or unpaid maternity

2.7.4 Paid maternity leave cannot start earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth. Exceptions to this are:

- if you give birth earlier than the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth, your paid maternity leave automatically begins from the date of childbirth
- if you supply evidence of your incapacity to work, you may be allowed paid maternity leave from the appropriate date
- if your baby is still-born after the 24th week of pregnancy (i.e. the 16th week before the expected week of childbirth), statutory paid maternity leave may begin as early as the 16th week before the expected week of childbirth

2.7.5 Summary of maternity pay entitlement by length of service

This table provides a breakdown of what you will be entitled to be paid based on your length of service on the first week of the qualifying period.

Length of service	Maternity Pay
Less than 26 weeks continuous service by the 15 th week before the EWC (qualifying period)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eligible for SMP • May qualify for maternity allowance (MA) see www.gov.uk for more information
More than 26 weeks continuous service, up to 1 year by the 15 th week before the EWC (qualifying period)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be paid SMP for the first 6 weeks at 90% of your average weekly earnings (AWE) before tax • the remaining 33 weeks: £151.97 or 90% of your AWE (whichever is lower) • the final 13 weeks will be unpaid
1 year or more years of continuous service at the 15 th week before the EWC (qualifying period)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitled to additional occupational maternity pay (inclusive of SMP) see rates below

2.7.6 How much is Occupational Maternity Pay

The breakdown for Frontline OMP for eligible employees is outlined in the table below

Weeks	Payment
1 – 24 (24 weeks)	100% salary (inclusive of SMP)
25 – 39 (15 weeks)	Paid SMP (151.97 p/week)
40 – 52 (13 weeks)	Unpaid leave

2.7.7 Maternity pay will be paid into your bank account on the same date as your normal pay date and will be subject to the deduction of Income tax and National Insurance Contributions.

2.7.8 Benefits while on maternity leave

Benefits in kind (e.g. laptops, mobile phones etc.) will continue throughout OML and AML. If you are already a member of the childcare voucher scheme Frontline will continue to contribute to your childcare voucher payments throughout maternity leave based on the contributions made before going on leave.

NB: The childcare voucher scheme is closed to new employees.

2.7.9 Pension contribution while on maternity leave

Employer contributions: We will continue to make your usual contributions throughout maternity leave. The amount paid throughout will be based on what you were contributing before going on leave.

Employee contributions: If you normally make contributions to your pension, your contributions will continue will you receive payment on maternity leave (OMP and SMP). Your contributions will be based on the amount you are paid each month.

2.7.10 If you want to pause your contributions during your maternity leave let the People team know as soon as possible.

2.8 Maternity Allowance (MA)

2.8.1 Maternity Allowance may be available to help you take time off to have your baby if you are not entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay from an employer. MA can be paid for up to 39 weeks. The important date for working out how long MA can be paid for is the date your baby is due not when your baby is born. For more information on Maternity Allowance see the following [web page](#).

2.9 KIT days

2.9.1 What are KIT days?

You may, by agreement with your manager and the People team, carry out up to 10 days work – known as “Keeping in Touch days” at any time during the maternity leave period, with the exception of the first two weeks after your baby is born. Such days are different to

the reasonable contact described above, as during Keeping in Touch days you can actually carry out work, for which you will be paid.

2.9.2 Any work on any day during the maternity pay or maternity leave period will count as a half or whole KIT day, up to the 10-day maximum. For example; if you come in for a one-hour training session and carry out no other work that day; you will have used half of one of your KIT days and be paid as such.

2.9.3 The type of work that you may undertake on Keeping in Touch days is a matter for agreement between you and your manager. They may be used for any activity which would ordinarily be classed as work under your contract; examples could include (but are not limited to) attending a conference, undertaking a training activity or attending a team meeting.

2.9.4 Work during maternity leave may only take place if you both agree. We cannot require you to work during maternity leave, nor do you have the right to work KIT days if your manager doesn't agree to them. If you are offered an opportunity to work a KIT day you are entitled to turn it down.

2.9.5 KIT day pay

Because Keeping in Touch days allow work to be done under your contract of employment, you are entitled to be paid for that work. You will be paid full pay for the hours in half day blocks. The payment for KIT days would be made on top of any SMP or OMP you are eligible to receive.

2.10 Annual leave

Accruing annual leave and public holidays

2.10.1 You will continue to accrue contractual annual leave throughout both OML (26 weeks) and AML (26 weeks). It is not possible to take annual leave at the same time as maternity leave. All public holidays and any non-contractual holidays given to all employees (such as the Christmas Closure) occurring during maternity leave will be accrued as annual leave, and you will have the right to take these on your return to work.

2.10.2 It will be possible for you to use any untaken annual leave either before you start your maternity leave, or once your maternity leave has finished. Although wherever possible, you

should take any annual leave you have left before you start your maternity leave. You will be eligible to carry over any unused and accrued leave to the following calendar year while on leave. If your manager and the People team agree, annual leave may also be taken immediately before you return to work i.e. appended to your maternity leave, or used to support a phased return to work. If you take annual leave immediately following maternity leave you will be unable to resume maternity leave thereafter.

2.10.3 It is useful, once you have given notice that you are pregnant, to incorporate annual leave arrangements into your plans.

2.10.4 Selling annual leave while on maternity leave

While on maternity leave you are not eligible to receive any additional pay other than KIT days (see [Section 2.9](#)). This means that if you want to sell any annual leave while on maternity leave (this can only happen during either of the windows), the payment would be delayed and made when your return to work. You would only be eligible to sell up to the maximum of 5 days in a rolling year (see [Leave and Absence policy](#)).

2.10.5 Carrying over annual leave after returning to work

Once you have returned to work, the usual carry over rules apply (see [Leave and Absence policy](#)), and annual leave may be carried over to the following leave year but no more than 5 days, so it is advisable you use it as part of your return to work plans.

2.11 Sickness absence following maternity leave

2.11.1 If, due to illness you are unable to return to work following your maternity leave, normal sickness absence rules apply from the date you intended to resume duty. You are not allowed to bring forward your intended date of return to qualify for paid sickness absence. Paid sickness absence immediately following maternity leave terminates the maternity arrangements.

2.12 Contact during maternity leave

2.12.1 During maternity leave your manager or the People team may wish to contact you, and in the same way you may wish to contact your manager or the People team. The frequency and nature of the contact will depend on a number of factors, such as the nature of your work and post, any agreement that you and your manager might have reached before

maternity leave began as to contact; and whether either party needs to communicate important information to the other.

2.13 Premature birth and Neonatal Care

2.13.1 We recognise this is a stressful and difficult experience that any parent can face so we want to take proactive measures to support you, should your baby be born prematurely or born full-term but needs neonatal care.

2.13.2 Eligibility

This is a particularly challenging time for parents, therefore any employee that has been on maternity (paternity or shared parental) leave at Frontline is eligible for both premature birth and neonatal leave and pay. This means that regardless of your length of service before going on maternity you will be eligible for additional leave and pay in the event of premature birth or your baby requiring neonatal care. The amount leave and pay available for each is outlined in the relevant sections below.

2.13.3 You should retain a copy of the discharge papers you receive when your baby leaves hospital as these may be required to confirm the leave and pay.

2.13.4 Ordinarily, both Premature Baby and Neonatal Care leave and pay will be added to the end of your maternity leave, after the entitlement for leave has been exhausted. However we can be flexible if you would prefer to receive the *pay* earlier, once your maternity pay has exhausted (i.e. before the end of the 52 weeks) and extend the leave unpaid.

2.13.5 Once your Premature Baby or Neonatal Care *leave* has been exhausted however you will be required to return to work, use annual or unpaid leave should you wish to extend your leave further.

2.13.6 Your normal entitlement to maternity leave will continue to apply and will not be affected by this scheme.

2.13.7 Telling your manager and the People team

It is important that you tell your manager and the People team as soon as practically possible to ensure we can provide appropriate support and make the necessary arrangements for your additional pay and leave for both premature baby and neonatal care.

We recognise this may not be possible straight away as it's a particularly challenging time, but to be eligible you must let your manager or the People team know at least 8 weeks before your current maternity leave is due to end.

2.13.8 Support

We want to be able to support during this time, and want to remind you that you will still have access to confidential support available through our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) while on leave. If you would like to access additional support through the Occupational Health provider speak to your manager and the People team to arrange this. We will support you as best we can when you return to work and encourage you to speak with your line manager about what would be most useful for you.

2.13.9 Premature birth: Leave and Pay

If you are the primary caregiver, and your baby is born before 37 weeks you will be entitled to have your maternity leave and pay extended by the number of days your baby was born prior to their due date, regardless of whether the baby is required to stay in hospital during this time.

2.13.10 Neonatal Care: Leave and Pay

If you are the primary caregiver, and your baby is born after 37 weeks but requires Neonatal Care during their first 28 days of life, you will be eligible for additional Neonatal Care leave and pay for every day your baby spends in the care during their first 28 days of life.

2.14 Pregnancy loss

2.14.1 We are committed to supporting all employees who suffer the loss of a pregnancy, whether you experience it yourself, it's your partner or your baby's surrogate mother. Regardless of the circumstance (this includes but is not limited to miscarriage, still birth, termination) we want to outline the support and leave available to you if you.

2.14.2. Telling your manager

We encourage you to share what you feel comfortable sharing with your manager, to ensure they can support you at this time. We recognise however this may not be something you wish to discuss, so would ask that you at least flag with your People Partner before taking any leave.

2.14.3 Eligibility

We recognise that this is a very difficult time for anyone, as such regardless of your length of service you would be eligible for paid time leave in the event of a pregnancy loss of up to five days.

We want to be clear that this is separate (and if needed, in addition) to compassionate leave. If following the five days leave you want to take some more time you could then take up to 5 days compassionate leave, fully paid. Thereafter, you would need to consider taking annual leave, unpaid leave or making use of flexible work practices outlined in the [Leave and Absence policy](#).

2.14.4 Paid leave for medical appointments

You are entitled to paid time off to attend appointments relating to pregnancy loss which do not fall within the above mentioned period of leave.

We recognise that it will not always be possible for you to arrange these around the demands of work due to the nature of pregnancy loss, and encourage you to speak with your manager and the People team about this.

2.14.5 Support

We want to ensure you feel supported by your manager and the organisation. You may find it beneficial to access more practical support through our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) with Care First or Occupational Health provider. In addition, you are encouraged to speak to your manager and People Partner about anything else that would support you personally during this time. Examples might include (but not limited to), more breaks/reduced screen time, a temporary flexible working arrangement, camera off on calls etc.

2.14.6 Pregnancy loss after 24 weeks

If you experience a pregnancy loss after 24 weeks you would be eligible for leave and pay in line with our maternity leave policy ([Section 2.7](#)).

2.15 Returning to work after maternity leave

2.15.1 Unless otherwise notified, the date you return to work will normally be the first working day 52 weeks after your maternity leave began. You cannot return to work later than this day unless using annual leave or under circumstances outlined in [Section 2.13](#) above

2.15.2 Returning to work before end of maternity leave

If you want to return to work before the end of your maternity leave, you must give at least 8 weeks' notice before your original return to work date, or the new intended return to work date (whichever is sooner).

2.15.3 If the you attempt to return to work earlier than the end your maternity leave without giving 8 weeks' notice, you may need to postpone your return until the full eight weeks' notice has been given. However, this will not be to a date later than the end of your maternity leave period.

2.15.4 Returning to work later than originally notified

If you have notified that you want to return to work earlier than expected as outlined in the paragraphs above, you are still entitled to change your mind. However, in these circumstances you should give notice of this new, later, date of return at least eight weeks before the earlier date.

For example, if, you decide that you do not want to take the full 52 weeks and give notice that you will return after six months (for example, on 1 October) you can still change your mind and tell your manager and the People team that you want to take a longer period – up to the full year of maternity leave – as long as you give eight weeks' notice before your existing return date (in this case, eight weeks before 1 October – i.e. 6 August).

2.15.5 What if I don't want to return to work after maternity leave?

If you do not want to return to work after maternity leave, you must give the notice of termination required by in your contract of employment. It will help Frontline if you can give as much notice as possible.

2.15.6 If you are unable to return to work at the end of your entitlement to maternity leave because you are medically unfit to work, you should submit medical certification in the usual way

and you will then transfer from maternity leave to sick leave. Subsequently, the normal sickness procedures will be followed – see [Leave and Absence policy](#).

2.15.7 If you do not return to work or do not work out your full notice period, and you have received OMP in excess of your statutory entitlement, Frontline reserves the right to claim back pay. Repayment is waived if you provide medical evidence that you are unable to return because your child has a disability and requires continuous attention at home. You must provide medical evidence of your child's disability.

2.15.8 What if I resign and then my circumstances change?

If you resign because you do not then intend to return to work, but later wish to return because of an unexpected change in your circumstances, you will have no absolute right to return and may need to apply if a vacancy is available.

2.16 Redundancy during maternity leave

2.16.1 If a redundancy situation arises at any stage during your maternity leave which means it is not practicable for Frontline to continue to employ you under your original contract of employment, you are entitled to be offered (before that contract ends) a suitable alternative vacancy, where one is available.

2.16.2 If you are offered a suitable alternative vacancy (you are entitled to a four-week trial period in which to decide whether the employment is suitable, and this period may be extended beyond four weeks by written agreement).

2.17 Shared parental leave

2.17.1 Shared parental leave enables you to share any untaken leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with your partner provided you end your maternity leave early (to “share” what you have left).

2.17.2 To be able to take shared parental leave, you and your partner must meet various eligibility requirements and have complied with the relevant curtailment, notice and evidence requirements. You and your partner should ensure that you’re both liaising with your employers when making requests for shared parental leave.

2.17.3 Please refer to the [Shared Parental Leave](#) policy, where you will find full details of the eligibility requirements, as well as instructions as to how maternity leave can be curtailed.

2.18 Your position on returning to work following maternity leave

2.18.1 Return to Work before, or at the end of, Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)

On returning to work following OML you have a right to return to the same job, which in the Frontline context normally means a similar job in the same job family, on the same terms and conditions as you were subject to previously. You are entitled to benefit from any general improvements to the rate of pay, or other terms and conditions, which may have been introduced for your tier while you were away, as if you hadn't been away.

2.18.2 Return to work before, or at the end of, Additional Maternity Leave (AML)

If returning to work after AML, in other words you have taken more than 26 weeks' maternity leave; you are entitled to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions of employment as if you had not been absent, unless there is a reason why it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to your old job, in which case you will be offered a similar job on terms and conditions which are not less favorable than your original job.

2.18.3 Taking ordinary parental leave following maternity leave

A period of ordinary parental leave of four weeks or less has no impact on your right of return. If you take a period of parental leave straight after maternity leave, you will be treated as though returning to work after additional maternity leave. Full details on ordinary parental leave are in the [Leave and Absence policy](#).

2.18.4 If there is a reason which makes it impracticable for you to return to your original job, a similar job will be found for you. The new job will be such that:

- the work carried out is both suitable and appropriate for you to do in the circumstances; and
- the terms and conditions of your employment are no less favorable to you than they would have been had you continued to be employed in your old job.

2.18.5 If offered a new position that fulfils the criteria above and you refuse it, you will have effectively resigned.

an I request to work flexibly?

2.18.7 All employees have the right to request flexible working patterns. Full details are provided in the [Leave and Absence policy](#)

Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 Frontline policies and documents

3.1.1 Refer to other Frontline policies for further information on:

- Shared Parental Leave
- Leave and Absence
- Adoption and Surrogacy