

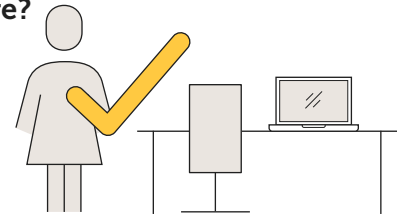


### What is maternity leave?

Time off work for pregnant women around the time they have a baby.

### Who can take maternity leave?

Any pregnant woman, regardless of their length of service or the number of hours they work.

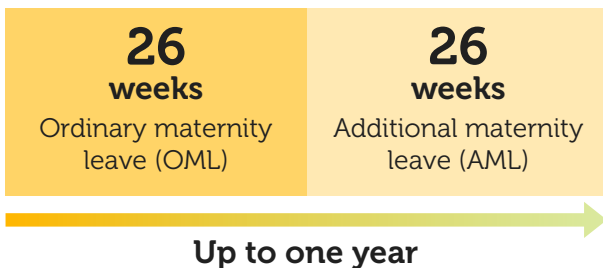


### How much leave can they take?

Employees are entitled to up to one year's maternity leave.

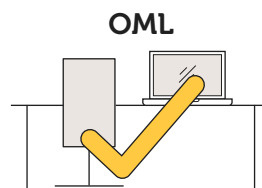
A woman who is the biological mother of her child is usually entitled to take 52 weeks' maternity leave which consists of:

- 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML); followed by
- 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML)

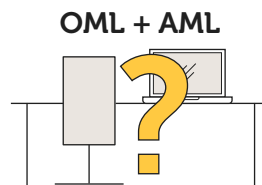


### What rights do they have about returning to work?

An employee who only takes ordinary maternity leave (OML) has the right to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.



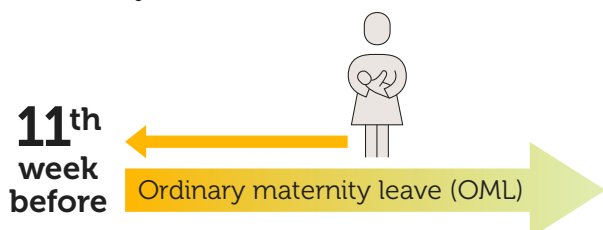
An employee who returns after additional maternity leave (AML) is entitled to return to the same job, unless it's not practical. If they can't return to the same job, the employee is entitled to suitable alternative work. The terms and conditions must be no less favourable than their previous role.



### When can they take maternity leave?

Employees can choose when to start maternity leave, but it cannot begin before the start of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth.

For example, a woman whose due date is 1 May cannot start maternity leave until 8 February at the earliest.



### What are the top things HR should do to manage maternity leave successfully?

- Check your policies clearly spell out what employees can get and outline any information relating to holiday entitlement and other benefits like pensions during maternity leave.
- Provide managers with guidance on how to support someone on maternity leave.
- Ensure employees are aware of their rights upon their return to work.



- Keep records to ensure compliance as well as checking employees are supported.

For more information visit the [maternity leave topic page](#) on the CIPD website for factsheets, guides and employment law.