



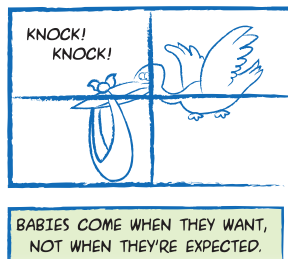
What to do when an employee tells you she is pregnant.

Maternity entitlements.

Your obligations.

Arranging maternity cover.

What you need to know about temps.



Don't forget to say "congratulations"!

“ Here at **FirstBase** we know that how you treat your member of staff at this sensitive time can affect how all of your staff react to you in the future. **”**

Important things to consider when you're given the 'good news'...

Women make up nearly half of the workforce in the UK and more than 80% will become mothers during their working life. In the UK the average age of motherhood is 30, so most working women over this age will be parents.

Returning to work after having a baby is a transition and is part of a process that starts as soon as an employee becomes pregnant. Effective preparation will help you, your employee and the wider organisation to achieve a smooth transition, with a positive outcome for everyone.

1 It's important to remember that this is a huge step for your employee, especially if it's her first baby. She will be unsure of how you and her colleagues will react, whether or not she wants to return to work, how she'll cope with a new baby, childcare, etc., while at the same time being very excited about it all - in short, emotional turmoil! So don't forget to say congratulations and allow some time for her colleagues to do the same.

3 Whilst you may be genuinely happy for your member of staff, it is natural to be concerned about meeting operational requirements and the possible impact on the business, especially if this is the first time your company has managed maternity. Being professional and prepared will enable you to reassure your employee that she is valued, enable her to confirm her commitment and increase your ability to make the transition easier for everybody..

2 Check your employee knows her obligations of what to provide in writing and when. Agree a date for a meeting with her to start planning a smooth transition and, if necessary, a risk assessment. You will need to know if she's had any specific advice relating to work from her doctor or midwife and identify key dates:

- Baby's due date
- Dates of antenatal appointments
- Provisional dates for maternity leave
- Provisional date of return to work

Some dates will have to be provisional initially, as babies come when they are ready, rather than when they are due and new mothers vary in their readiness to leave work/ leave their baby to return to work.

4 Schedule time to research your legal obligations if you do not already know them and to research your organisation's maternity policy and flexible working policy (or develop them, if you do not already have them), to provide to your employee.

5 Maternity leave will affect more than just the pregnant employee. Colleagues may be expected to take on some of their work or help train a new member of staff, so care may be needed when breaking the news to the rest of the team. Agree dates to create a handover plan, keep in touch plan, performance review and back to work plan, with input from colleagues.

What you and your employee should know

As an employer, you should know your pregnant employee has four key legal entitlements:

- **Paid time off for antenatal care**, which can also include antenatal or parenting classes if they've been recommended by a doctor or midwife. It's illegal for employers to refuse to give pregnant employees time off for antenatal care or refuse to pay their normal rate for this time off, but fathers don't have a legal right to time off to accompany their partners. *Employees can't take time off for antenatal appointments until they've told the employer about their pregnancy.*

- **Maternity leave** - up to 52 weeks. The first 26 weeks is known as 'Ordinary Maternity Leave', the last 26 weeks as 'Additional Maternity Leave'. The earliest leave can be taken is 11 weeks before the expected 'due date'. Employees must take at least 2 weeks after the birth (or 4 weeks if they're a factory worker). *Employees must tell their employer about the pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the beginning of the week the baby is due. If this isn't possible (e.g. because they didn't know they were pregnant) the employer must be told as soon as possible. If the employee is off work for a pregnancy-related illness in the 4 weeks before the baby is due, maternity leave and Statutory Maternity Pay will start automatically, no matter what was previously agreed.*

During maternity leave, employee and employer can agree to have up to 10 'keep in touch' days (to be paid on top of their maternity pay).

- **Maternity pay** - depending on the terms of employment, 39 weeks could be paid, either as statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance or contractual maternity pay. *Employees must also tell the employer when they want to start their Statutory Maternity Leave and Pay*

- **Protection against unfair treatment**, discrimination or dismissal - the employee has the right to return to their original job or a suitable alternative. Employers can't change a pregnant employee's contract terms and conditions without agreement - if they do they are in breach of contract.

Health and Safety for Pregnant Employees

When your employee tells you they're pregnant, you should assess the risks to the woman and her baby.

Risks could be caused by:

- heavy lifting or carrying
- standing/sitting for long periods without adequate breaks
- exposure to toxic substances
- long working hours

Take steps to remove risks where possible. If the risks can't be removed (e.g. by offering suitable alternative work/hours) the employee should be suspended on full pay. For details, see the Health & Safety Executive website.

Planning the handover is crucial

“ See what can be covered by colleagues and what can't and organise 'Keep In Touch' days to make the return easier. ”



Filling the Gap

There are many options for covering maternity leave. What you need to do will depend on the employee's job, the length of maternity leave, other people's responsibilities, the demands of the workplace and the size and resources of your organisation.

Common options for maternity cover are:

- **Temporary replacement with a single person;** this could be a transfer from another part of the organisation, allowing a junior member of the team to step up or recruitment of a temporary employee or contractor. Ensure that this is understood as a temporary position from the outset.
- **Dispersal of responsibilities** throughout the remaining team. Breaking a role down like this can be useful if the employee wants to return on a part-time basis.
- **Postponement of activities.**

How can FirstBase help me?

“ We can help you break down the job role, identify the parts of the job that need to be covered, what can be put on hold and any extras that might be handy to have covered. ”

TELEPHONE SKILLS
NOTE TAKING
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
FILING
PROJECT MANAGEMENT
SELF MOTIVATED
EFFICIENT
CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS
ADVANCED IT SKILLS
LATERAL THINKING
GOOD UNDER PRESSURE



The impact of maternity leave will depend on your employee's role. If it involves contact with external stakeholders, clients or suppliers, the handover plan will be different from a role that is internally focussed.

A detailed analysis of the role will help you to identify the options and competencies needed for maternity cover, build a plan of who to tell and when, plus a handover and re-induction plan. It may be a useful starting point for understanding the feasibility of flexible working if this is requested. The plans for maternity cover should reflect the temporary nature of the cover.

Work with your employee to build a handover plan that includes when and who will take on each part of her role. This will also enable the person picking up the role to prepare and to have a suitable amount of time for shadowing if required.

Your employee may want to use holiday to reduce the number of days she works per week at the end of her pregnancy, especially if she has been advised by her doctor or midwife that she is likely to be very large or there is a risk of premature birth. Your employee can use health and safety rights or sick leave, instead of holiday. The advantages, if she chooses to do this, are a lower risk of unforeseen absence and her confidence and a good level of performance is more likely to be retained.

How do you recruit the right candidates?

“ **FirstBase** conduct thorough interviews with each of our candidates to ensure they have the right skill set. ”



How to get the best out of temporary cover

When recruiting people it's so important to get it right. There are immeasurable costs that can be attributed to recruiting the wrong person, not least the effect it can have on your existing team.

Think through what you want from a candidate and what you want them to do - this information can be discussed either verbally or via a job and/or person spec. We're always happy to talk through options and to keep within your budget.

If you have staff who are happy to take on some of the up-coming role, but not all of it, it may be worth considering adding other projects to the job spec, that your current staff don't have time to tackle.

Once you have an idea of who you're looking for, we will manage the recruitment process, communicate with all interested parties and arrange interviews at your discretion.

The sooner you start the process, the more time you have to train the temp - this can also set up a relationship between the temp and the leaver, which will be useful when your permanent member of staff returns.

If your member of staff decides that they may not want to return, or may want to come back part-time, encourage them to give you as much notice as possible. If they know before they leave that they would like to return on a part-time basis, it will enable you to decide if that will work for your organisation and to recruit with that in mind. If they are unsure, we can recruit on a 'temp to perm' basis, bearing in mind that the position may (or is likely to) go permanent and will talk to you about only those people we know are searching for permanent work.

Many of our candidates will consider temporary work initially as it gives them an opportunity to prove themselves. As long as you remain happy with the candidate provided, you are free to employ them as a permanent member of your team after they have completed 12 weeks of employment.

What you need to know about temps

If your business has never employed contract or temporary staff before, it's important to know what to expect and the benefits of flexible staff.

When the economic downturn started, many employers put a temporary hold on recruitment in a bid to save money. In the intervening period, business requirements and the wider economic landscape are changing and employers are increasingly using a blend of permanent and contract or temporary workers, allowing them to work in more flexible and responsive ways. Temporary and contract staff offer significant benefits, particularly by bringing in specialist skill sets for defined periods of time. So what do employers need to know?

1 *Finding the Right Contract and Temporary Workers.*
Unless the business has a large internal recruitment function with the ability to recruit temporary and contract staff effectively, the best way to bring these staff in by far is to use a recruitment agency.

2 *Contract workers are often vital for projects and technological implementations, or to support business-change efforts of any kind. Employing a contractor, you get immediate access to a wealth of skills without needing to take on a new fixed overhead. Temporary workers offer a similar benefit, in that they are an instant resource and available to fill in skills gaps on a highly flexible basis.*

3 *Fixed-term and temporary contracts should only be used for transparent and objective reasons, i.e. there must be a genuine temporary or fixed-term need for a member of staff – this could be to work on a specific project that requires an additional workforce or to cover maternity leave, for instance. Both employer and employee should ensure that they agree the contract will be fixed-term before employment begins.*

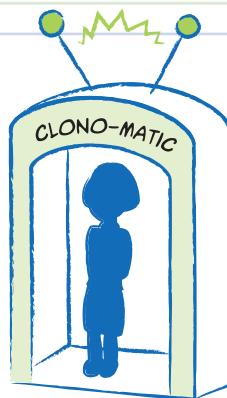
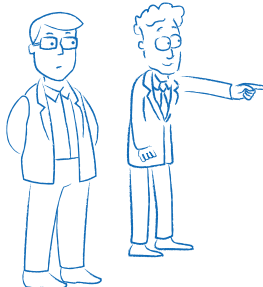
Fixed-term or temporary contracts contain a pre-determined end date which can either be a specific calendar date or follow an agreed length of time. The contract must end after the fixed-term, but may be renewed if there is a need.

4 *For temporary staff, there are new laws being implemented to protect their rights and prevent them from being used as cheap labour. The Agency Workers Regulations 2010 lay out these provisions and bring agency workers up to the same level as permanent workers, including entitlement to basic pay parity after twelve weeks, access to facilities and other provisions. We will be happy to advise on the detail. The overall changes are positive given that flexible and temporary staff are set to provide the linchpin of future economic growth and, at First Base, we believe in implementing ethical working practices, so we'll help with contracts and ensure you get the best people for your organisation and they are treated fairly.*

**Need help
with your
interviews?**

“ At **FirstBase** we're happy to interview for you to your criteria or form an objective part of your interview panel. **”**

WE'LL HELP YOU FIND THE PERFECT TEMP TO FILL HER SHOES.



“

I'm very proud of the way we operate and really passionate about making sure we uphold our standards in what is a highly competitive market.

”

We have to have standard terms and conditions of business as we are governed by the **Recruitment and Employment Confederation**, but we much prefer to work to our own high standards put together over years of trading in the recruitment sector.

What sets us apart:

- *We'll listen, learn, and make sure we fully understand your requirements*
- *Assess your situation, the problem it's causing you and understand what type of candidate you need to help you solve it*
- *Agree with you on how we can work together*
- *Keep our prices competitive, working within your budget*
- *Search our database of high calibre candidates using our knowledge of people that would fit your organisation, or advertise using relevant media if necessary*
- *Conduct interviews and appropriate skill tests*
- *Manage all applicants and make sure you get sent details of only those who are relevant*
- *Prepare candidates for their interviews*
- *Liaise with all shortlisted candidates to make sure they know the outcome of the interviews*
- *And... we will not ask you to pay a penny if you're not happy!*

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