



Family/ Maternity Policy

Why and who

This policy explains the support available to employees who are expecting or have recently had a baby. It includes information about taking time off for antenatal appointments and maternity leave and pay. It should be used alongside the Family Policies: Guidance Document.

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees. It is not part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.



Family/Maternity Policy

The important bits

The lingo

When it comes to any form of family leave, there's a lot of HR lingo and abbreviations. Any specific to this policy are defined here, but there's also a full glossary in the Family Policies: Guidance Document.

For this policy, the most important term is your **expected week of confinement/childbirth (EWC)**. This is the week your baby is due to arrive. You'll be given a **MATB1 form** by your midwife or GP when you're about 20 weeks' pregnant that confirms this date.

Process of confirming family/maternity leave and pay

The process you need to follow to confirm your maternity leave and pay will look something like the following diagram:



We know this is a big change and we're here to support you. All discussions with your manager or the People team will remain confidential until you're ready to share more. Tell us know as soon as possible once you're pregnant, ideally by the end of the 15th week of your EWC. Telling us early helps us to provide you with the right support, plan for your handover and prepare your family leave documents. It also gives you time to ask us any questions you might have about your maternity.

Family/Maternity leave

To qualify for family/maternity leave, make sure you tell us by the end of the 15th week before your EWC. You also need to upload your MATB1 to [4People](#) for payroll and tell your manager and the [People Partnering](#) team.

When you get your MATB1 form you can complete the [family leave instruction request form](#) with your manager and upload it along with your MATB1 to your [4People](#) record. You or your manager should then email



[People Enquiries](#). You must also complete a risk assessment with your manager.

A confirmation letter will be sent to you for review once everything is processed.

The maximum maternity leave you can take is 52 weeks. How much maternity leave you take (up to the maximum 52 weeks) is up to you, but legally you must take the two weeks immediately after the birth and you cannot start maternity leave earlier than the 11th week before your EWC.

The 52 weeks of maternity is made up of 26 weeks of **ordinary maternity leave (OML)** and 26 weeks of **additional maternity leave (AML)**, regardless of your working hours or length of service. The diagram below illustrates how this works:

OML (ordinary maternity leave)	AML (additional maternity leave)
EWC/baby Weeks 0-26 DOB	Weeks 27-53

For example:

- your EWC is 1 October 2025
- you request 52 weeks of maternity leave, starting on 1 October 2025
- OML is 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026

The key difference between OML and AML is how they affect your role when you return to work

During or at the end of **OML**:

- You can return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

During or at the end of **AML**:

- You can come back to the same job on the same terms and conditions **unless** there have been significant changes that make it impossible for you to go back to the same role.
- If this happens, we will try to find a suitable alternative with no less favourable terms and conditions.

Family/Maternity pay

The amount of family/maternity pay you are entitled to depends on your length of service at the **qualifying week**. To work out the qualifying week, find the Sunday before the day the baby is due (or the due day if that is a Sunday) and count back 15 Sundays. This Sunday is the start of the qualifying week.



Pay is based on your **average weekly earnings (AWE)**. This is your average earnings in the 2 months up to the last pay day before the end of your qualifying week – this is known as the **relevant period**.



Qualifying week
(Sunday –
Saturday)

For example:

- EWC is 1 October 2025
- qualifying week is 15 to 21 June 2025
- relevant period is 1 April to 31 May 2025

Thankfully, there's a GOV.UK [Statutory Maternity Pay calculator](#) you can put your details into and it will calculate how much statutory maternity pay you're entitled to – so you don't have to try to figure it out yourself!

As well as **statutory maternity pay (SMP)**, Channel 4 offers **enhanced maternity pay**. This is a top up based on the length of your service at the qualifying week. The table below explains what you may be entitled too.

Length of service at qualifying date	Family/Maternity pay entitlement
Less than 26 weeks of continuous service	1 month full AWE pay. You could also be entitled to maternity allowance paid by the Government . More info can be found on the Government website .
26 weeks to 12 months continuous service	4 months' at full AWE pay (inclusive of SMP). 23 weeks at SMP. 13 weeks unpaid.
More than 12 months continuous service	4 months' at full AWE pay (inclusive of SMP). 4 months' at half AWE pay (inclusive of SMP). 7 weeks of SMP. 13 weeks unpaid.

To help yourself back into work after your family/maternity leave, you can take up to 10 **keeping in touch (KIT)** days without having to end or change



your family/maternity leave dates. These are completely optional and must be agreed by both you and your manager. Any KIT days will be paid at the normal rate of pay and not on top of maternity pay. This is done by uploading a KIT day form to your [4People](#) record. More details about KIT days are in the [Family Policies: Guidance Document](#).

The really important bits

Risk assessment

When you tell us about your pregnancy, your manager will complete a mandatory [risk assessment](#) to make sure there is a safe working environment for you and your baby. If your health changes, ask for a review. If you have concerns about risks, we'll make reasonable adjustments where needed.

If you're absent from work because of pregnancy-related issues, please log it in your [4People](#) absence record. This won't be counted as sickness.

If you can't work and are absent because of a pregnancy-related illness in the 4 weeks before your EWC, we may automatically start your statutory maternity leave. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis, and medical advice will be taken into account where necessary.

Benefits

You'll still be entitled to and receive any benefits that you've already registered for and had access to before your maternity leave. You'll get a letter that explains how your pension, any variable pay and any other benefits will be affected during your maternity leave.

If you normally make pension contributions, these will continue during your maternity leave, but they'll be reduced in line with your actual monthly pay. If you want to continue contributing based on your normal pay, please contact [People Enquiries](#). Channel 4 will still pay the full employer contributions based on your full pay for the whole period of your maternity leave.

Support and related policies

If you have any questions about this policy or process you can:

- speak to your manager
- contact the [People Partnering team](#) with specific or personal questions
- contact [People Enquiries](#)

Other policies that might help are:



[Family Policies: Guidance Document](#)

[Adoption Policy](#)

[Carers Policy](#)

[Fertility Policy](#)

[Neonatal Policy](#)

[Unpaid Parental Leave Policy](#)

[Family/Parental Policy](#)

[Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)

[Pregnancy Loss Policy](#)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What websites should I look at to find out about maternity?

There are many websites that can help but [Maternity Action](#) is a great source of information and also provides free advice about your rights and entitlements.

What do I do about antenatal appointments?

You're allowed reasonable paid time off to attend antenatal care appointments – including medical examinations, relaxation classes and parent-craft classes (for example, National Childbirth Trust classes). Where possible, please arrange these around the demands of your department. You may be asked to show proof of your appointment. Please agree any leave with your manager and log these absences in your [4People](#) absence log in advance.

Do I have to use up my annual leave before I go on maternity leave, and will I lose it if I'm not able to?

Before your maternity leave officially starts, you can continue to book and plan holidays as usual (see the [Holiday Policy](#)). Any holiday you've not been able to take will roll over automatically, so no holiday is lost. You'll be able to take this when you return from maternity leave. You'll also continue to accrue holiday and bank holiday days during your maternity leave at your usual rate.

If you'd like to take a block of annual leave before you start your maternity leave, discuss this with your manager when you complete the [family leave instruction request form](#) so it can be planned properly.

If you'd like to change the start date of your maternity leave, you must give at least 28 days' notice. We'll confirm your new leave and return dates in writing.



What happens if my baby arrives early?

If you give birth earlier than expected, as soon as is practically possible, inform your manager because it will impact the official start dates of your maternity leave and pay, because by law, your maternity leave and pay must start once your baby is born.

If your baby arrives and needs neonatal care, we have a [Neonatal Leave Policy](#) which explains your entitlement to additional leave.

Can I top up my pay using annual leave during unpaid leave?

Unfortunately, no. Your maternity leave finishes as soon as you have an 'active' status on the payroll – whether this is working, holiday or sickness absence – and once your maternity leave finishes it can't be restarted. However, what you can do, instead of taking unpaid leave, is finish your maternity leave early and then use any accrued holiday days to extend your time off work. This should be agreed with your manager when completing the [family leave instruction request form](#) before you go on leave.

What if I want to return earlier than originally planned?

If you'd like to change your return date, you must give us at least 8 weeks' notice in writing, which should be sent directly to your manager. We may be able to accommodate an earlier return without this much notice, but it might be later than your proposed date.

What happens if I suffer a loss of pregnancy?

We're so sorry if this has happened to you, and we want to support you in the best way possible. Please read the [Pregnancy Loss Policy](#) to find out what to do and what support is available.

What if I want to take shared parental leave?

Please read the [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#).

Policy owner	People Team
Approved by	
Date of next review	Within 3 years