

Pregnancy-Related Sickness Absence

Sickness absence

You should be as flexible as you can about the amount of sick leave an employee takes as pregnancy-related illnesses affect people differently.

If an employee is having physical or mental health difficulties when pregnant, it is good practice to consider offering reasonable adjustments such as:

- different work start and finish times
- the option to do some work from home
- extra breaks
- an occupational health or dse assessment (for example to look at whether a chair can be adjusted for someone with back pain)

If they need long-term changes to how they work, [Flexible Working](#) should be considered.

Sick Pay

Whilst the Council is not required to offer separate sick pay arrangements for pregnancy-related absence, such absences should not be included in any assessment of an employee's overall sickness absence. Doing so could expose the Council to potential claims of sex discrimination — for example, if a sickness absence trigger is reached due to pregnancy-related leave.

If an employee is absent due to a pregnancy-related illness during the four weeks leading up to their expected due date, maternity leave will begin automatically and, where eligibility criteria are met, the employee will receive maternity pay rather than occupational or statutory sick pay.

NB: If you're not sure whether an illness is pregnancy-related, you can ask your employee to provide a [fit note from a registered healthcare professional](#).

If the baby arrives early, maternity leave and pay starts on the day after the birth.