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Fire & Rescue Service

Maternity, Paternity and Adoption policy (All employees)

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1 Policy

1.1 Introduction

Pregnancy, maternity, adoption and paternity represent exciting and sometimes challenging times of life; West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) is committed to supporting employees experiencing these changes. WYFRS is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to creating a positive working environment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect, provided with development opportunities and be a valued member of a team

1.2 Pregnancy and Safety at Work

Pregnant employees should expect to be treated in a way that is sensitive to their circumstances and should not, in any way, be singled out for inferior treatment. Pregnancy should be regarded as part of everyday life, any health and safety implications can be adequately addressed by the usual procedures for the management of wellbeing, health and safety. During this period it is important to focus, positively, on what the pregnant employee can do in terms of alternative roles and duties.

Pregnant women and new mothers¹ have a statutory entitlement not to be exposed to risks that could harm either themselves or their unborn child.

A pregnant operational employee must inform their relevant manager of a pregnancy, as soon as possible, in order that appropriate support and arrangements can be provided.

When pregnancy is suspected, a risk assessment should be conducted and medical advice should be sought immediately as to whether the employee can continue to perform their current duties. At the point their doctor advises them that they can no longer perform their current duties, or work their current pattern of hours; the employee should be consulted immediately over appropriate changes. In either case, they shall continue to receive their normal pay as per their conditions of service. Further risk assessments must be carried out at appropriate intervals throughout the duration of the pregnancy. If the employee cannot undertake alternative duties in a safe manner, based on the advice of the Authority Medical Advisor, the pregnant employee will be suspended on full pay until safe alternative duties can be found.

Similarly, on their return to work following maternity leave, there may be a temporary period during which a change in duties or pattern of working hours would be appropriate. Again, depending on medical advice, the employee's normal pay would continue to apply.

1.3 Maternity Provision

All pregnant employees (regardless of length of service) have the right in law to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave and to resume work afterwards. All employees who take maternity leave have the right to return to work at any time during their maternity leave (except during the first two weeks from the day of childbirth), subject to their following the correct notification procedures as set out below.

All pregnant employees have the right to return to the job in which they are currently employed by WYFRS, or a suitable alternative that is not on terms and conditions that are less favourable.

Employees must continue to be employed by WYFRS until immediately before the beginning of the 11th week before the baby is due (employees may work beyond this date, if they wish).

¹ "Mother" is used as it is the most common term but utilised on the understanding that an individual could self-identify in a different way with regards to gender identity.

Employees must notify their HR Business Partner of their pregnancy, in writing, no later than the end of the 15th week before the expected week of delivery and confirm whether they intend to return to work. Employees will, however, be able to change this date by giving WYFRS 28 days' notice, or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

On receipt of a notification of the intended date of commencement of maternity leave, WYFRS will, within 28 days, inform the employee of the day on which the maternity leave period will cease and the provisional date for the return to work.

Employees must forward Form MAT B1 (which will be issued either by a doctor or a midwife) to their HR Business Partner to confirm the expected date of birth.

If employees decide to return to work before the end of the 52 week maternity leave period, they must notify their HR Business Partner in writing, giving at least 8 weeks' notice.

Annual leave/sick leave entitlement will accrue during both paid and unpaid maternity leave.

If the baby does not live, or is still-born after 24 weeks of pregnancy, the maternity leave and pay still applies.

If the baby arrives early, prior to the official maternity leave start date, then the maternity leave will start on the day after the birth.

If employees are remanded in legal custody, undertake any paid work, or travel outside the European Union during the period of maternity leave, they must notify their HR Business Partner immediately, as this may affect their entitlement to maternity pay.

If employees agree to work up to 10 'keeping in touch' days during their maternity leave period, they will be paid their normal daily rate for each day of work. This rate of pay will be the same regardless of receiving any maternity pay or not at the time of carrying out the 'keeping in touch' days.

1.4 Occupational Maternity Pay

Employees with a minimum of 1 year's continuous Local Government Service at the beginning of the 11th week before the baby's due date:

- Will receive 39 weeks' pay, statutory and occupational maternity pay, comprising:
 - 6 weeks at 90% of their normal weekly wage, subject to adjustment for statutory maternity pay, where necessary (subject to length of service and earnings threshold); plus, subject to declaring their intention to return to work.
 - 33 weeks at half pay (occupational maternity pay), plus the lower rate of statutory maternity pay without adjustment, unless the combined benefits exceed full pay.
- If an employee declares their intention to return to work after their maternity leave and subsequently, does not return to work for at least 3 months, they will be required to repay 12 weeks of half pay (occupational maternity pay) advanced to them.
- Where an employee declares their intention not to return to work they will receive 33 weeks' pay based on the lower rate statutory maternity pay.

Where both parents work for WYFRS, one will be entitled to maternity pay and leave; the other will be entitled to maternity support leave (paternity leave) and pay.

1.5 Statutory Maternity Pay

Employees with less than 1 year's continuous Local Government Service at the beginning of the 11th week before the baby's due date:

- Will receive 39 weeks' pay based on statutory maternity pay entitlement.
- Should an employee decide to return to work before the end of maternity leave period, any outstanding entitlement to statutory maternity pay would cease.

There are two rates of statutory maternity pay (higher and lower). To qualify, an employee must have:

- 26 weeks service by the end of the 15th week, before the expected week of delivery, and
- average earnings in the 8 weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected date of delivery, equal to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions set by the government.

If employees do not qualify for statutory maternity pay, they will be issued with form SMP1 so that they can claim maternity allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions.

The higher rate statutory maternity pay is paid for 6 weeks and is based on 90% of average weekly earnings calculated over a set period of time. The lower rate is paid for 33 weeks and is set annually by the Government.

The situation may arise where the higher rate statutory maternity pay exceeds the occupational maternity pay an employee will receive from WYFRS; in this instance, they will receive the higher figure.

1.6 Adoption Provisions

WYFRS recognises that families come in all forms, and that adoption can play an important part in some families. **Employees, who choose to adopt, are entitled to the same support, leave and pay as employees on maternity leave.** Adoption can be a lengthy process prior to final court decision; as such managers should work with employees to provide necessary support or time away from work.

Employees must notify their HR Business Partner of their intention to take adoption leave, using form '[HRFRM262 – Adoption Leave Declaration Form](#)', within 7 days of being notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption, unless this is not reasonably practicable. The notification must state when the child is expected to be placed and when adoption leave is intended to commence.

Employees may start adoption leave from either the date of the child's placement (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or a fixed date up to 14 days before the expected date of the placement.

Where both parents work for WYFRS, one will be entitled to adoption pay and leave and the other will be entitled to adoption support leave (paternity leave) and pay. The couple must decide who is to take adoption leave and notify their HR Business Partner accordingly.

[More information can be found on adoption in the guidance section.](#)

1.7 Maternity/Adoption Support Leave (Paternity Leave)

Employees eligible for 10 days paid maternity support leave must fulfil the following criteria:

- Must have 26 weeks continuous Local Government Service ending with the 15th week before the child is due or the child is placed in the case of adoption.
- Be the child's (maternal or adoptive) father or the partner or nominated carer of a pregnant or adoptive mother at or around the time of the birth or placement of the child.

Maternity/adoption support leave provisions are inclusive and apply to same sex parents. The maternity/adoption support leave must be taken:

- Within 56 days of the child's birth or placement.
- After the child's birth or placement.
- In 1 complete block and consecutive weeks.

Maternity/adoption support leave comprises:

- 1 weeks' contractual maternity support leave and pay based on the employees actual salary, plus.
- 1 week's statutory leave and pay based on an amount set annually by the government, which is the same as statutory maternity pay.

[The procedure can be found in the guidance.](#)

1.8 Ante-Natal Care Appointments

All pregnant employees are entitled to time off with pay to attend ante-natal care, parent-craft and relaxation classes. An employee should first seek to make any such appointments outside of their normal working hours and if this is not possible then near to the start or end of their working day. The appointment should have been made on the advice of a registered doctor, certified midwife or health visitor. In addition, the employee should give the relevant manager reasonable notice of the date and time of the appointment and allow the relevant manager to inspect the appointment card and Certificate of Pregnancy (Form MAT B1), if required.

WYFRS employees, whose partners are pregnant, are entitled to take paid time of up to 6 and a half hours, on no more than 2 occasions, to accompany the pregnant woman to an ante-natal appointment. Whilst there is an understanding that appointment times are often given without patient choice, where possible appointments should be made outside of normal working hours. WYFRS may request evidence of appointments.

1.9 In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)

There is no statutory right for employees to take time off work in connection with fertility investigations or treatment options. However employees can apply for special leave (as per the [Leave Policy](#)) to attend and undergo IVF treatment or for the employee to make the time up at a later date. If the IVF treatment proves successful, then the employee would become entitled to ante-natal care appointments as any other pregnant employee; in such instances, the employee should notify their line manager and their HR Business Partner as soon as possible.

In cases where the employee is unable to work due to the effects of the treatment and are signed off work by their doctor, WYFRS will respond to this sensitively, but in line with the WYFRS [Attendance & Absence Management Policy](#).

1.10 Sickness Absence

As part of the WYFRS [Attendance & Absence Management Policy](#), an attendance improvement notice letter will not be issued to an employee whose sickness absence is attributed to pregnancy.

If an employee is absent from work during pregnancy owing to sickness, they will receive normal statutory or contractual sick pay in the same manner as they would during any other sickness absence providing they have not yet begun their maternity leave. If, however, the employee is absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness, after the beginning of the 4th week, before their expected week of childbirth, their maternity leave will start automatically.

If the employee is absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy, during the 4 weeks before the expected week of childbirth, they must notify their HR Business Partner in writing of this as soon as reasonably practicable.

1.11 Pension

Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme and Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) will pay contributions until the entitlement to maternity pay is exhausted. Pension scheme members will have the option of paying contributions for any periods of unpaid maternity leave, and should discuss the matter with WYFRS Pensions department.

[Further information can be found in the guidance.](#)

1.12 Flexible Working

In order to assist in managing the balance between work and family life, all employees have a right to apply to work flexibly. WYFRS has a duty to consider such requests seriously and will be able to refuse requests only where there are clear business grounds for doing so.

[Further information can be found in the guidance.](#)

2 Guidance

2.1 Introduction

This guidance seeks to provide advice regarding procedures and additional information for employees and managers regarding maternity, adoption and maternity/adoption support leave (paternity leave).

2.2 Before Maternity Leave

2.2.1 News of Pregnancy

Employees should inform their manager as soon as they know they are pregnant or soon as it is reasonably practical. In any event, the employee must provide notification of the pregnancy and start date of their maternity leave, in writing to the HR department, using form '[HRFRM261 Maternity Leave Declaration](#)', no later than the 15th week before the expected week of birth. Employees will, however, be able to change their maternity leave start date by giving WYFRS 28 days' notice, or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The manager should find out at what point the employee wishes to share news of their pregnancy with others. The employee is entitled to confidentiality and may wish to share their news with colleagues first hand, or keep it confidential for as long as possible; for example, to get through the early months of pregnancy without complications.

The manager should inform their HR Business Partner who will arrange a meeting with the pregnant employee to talk through timescales and outline the employee's rights and entitlements.

A welfare officer, of the employee's choice, should be appointed on news of pregnancy to put in place the necessary welfare arrangements and a [welfare log initiated](#).

For further information on welfare arrangements please refer to [WYFRS Manager's Guide to the Attendance & Absence Management Policy](#).

2.2.2 Grey Book Operational Employees

As soon as the pregnancy is confirmed, an operational Grey book employee will immediately be placed on appropriate non-operational duties until after the birth. A pregnant employee must stop attending operational incidents as soon as they know or suspect they may be pregnant and must inform their manager as soon as practicable. This arrangement is to protect the health and safety of the employee and their unborn child.

It is best for the wellbeing of the employee to minimise any disruption to working pattern or locality. Every effort should be made to ensure, where possible, employees do not experience negative impacts on their skill sets, and that training and development is adjusted as necessary.

Managers of operational employees should contact Employee Resources to arrange for the employee to be placed on non-operational duties. Possible non-operational duties a pregnant employee could undertake may include low risk meaningful work; such as, prevention or protection activities, community engagement, station or headquarters' projects and instructor roles. Managers should seek advice from Occupational Health as to what work their employees can do. The employee should agree working arrangements with their line manager and wherever possible, if the employee so wishes, they should be permitted to remain on station with their Watch or normal place of work. However, there may need to be some adjustment to their working hours, this should be reviewed periodically with a line manager.

The necessity to work night shifts will need to be reviewed as there may be little requirement for low-risk non-operational duties on such shifts. Again, it is beneficial to minimise disruption to an employee's working pattern and locality. The manager should seek guidance from Occupational Health and their HR Business Partner with regards to any new working arrangements. In all cases, any suitable alternative work (if available) will result in the employee retaining their normal salary and contractual benefits.

2.2.3 Green Book/Control Employees Undertaking High Risk duties

In order to support employees in higher risk roles, e.g. Fire Prevention/Protection, Property, Workshop, Water Office etc., managers must assess and undertake risk reduction measures by considering restrictions of high risk activities, e.g. eliminate lone-working, stop risk of exposure to violence at work, or working at height etc.

2.2.4 Risk Assessments

The following 5 generic groups of employees have been identified as having variable risk for a new or pregnant mother:

1. Operational
2. Fire Prevention and Protection green book employees
3. Office based green book employees
4. Non-office based green book employees – e.g. Workshops, Supplies.
5. Control

Given the varying risk, it is crucial, a specific risk assessment is conducted upon an employee informing WYFRS of their pregnancy.

Once notified of a pregnancy, the manager must carry out an individual risk assessment, using form [HRFRM260](#), with the individual and submit to OccupationalHealth@westyorksfire.gov.uk. Where possible, the manager should remove any risk that may be present. Further risk assessments must be carried out at appropriate intervals throughout the duration of the pregnancy, this includes instances where the role changes or the employee begins to feel tired at work due to their pregnancy and alternative working arrangements are required.

Completed copies will be held by the individual's manager and the employee with a copy to be sent to Occupational Health, who will review the suggested control measures and make recommendations/confirm that the action plan is considered to be satisfactory.

As the pregnancy develops employees should inform their manager and Occupational Health, in writing, if required, of any advice or recommendations received from their doctor which impact on work. This may include advice that should be considered as part of the individual's risk assessment, such as night work being inadvisable for health and safety reasons.

Should the employee experience health issues at work due to their pregnancy, WYFRS may give consideration to waiving the employee's notice period for the commencement of maternity leave, and mutually agreeing with the employee to starting maternity leave early as the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth (the earliest date maternity leave can voluntarily start) unless their child is born prematurely before that date in which case it will start earlier.

For advice on keeping healthy during pregnancy whilst working please contact Occupational Health.

2.2.5 Uniform

It is recognised that due to pregnancy some employees who wear uniform may become uncomfortable in their current uniform size. In such instances employees may purchase two pairs of reasonably priced black maternity trousers and have their costs reimbursed by submitting any receipts along with a 314

order form to Supplies. As the pregnancy progresses, employees may also contact Supplies to obtain larger shirt sizes, pregnant employee shall be permitted to wear uniformed shirts untucked if they become uncomfortable.

2.2.6 Annual Leave

Annual leave/public holiday entitlement will continue to accrue whilst on maternity/adoption leave. Employees are encouraged to take any outstanding holiday due to them before the commencement of maternity/adoption leave. However, if this is not possible, this may be carried over to the next leave year.

2.2.7 Maternity Buddy Scheme

The scheme is available to all WYFRS employees who are soon to go on, or currently on, maternity, maternity support (paternity), adoption or shared parental leave, or have returned to work within the last year from such a period of leave. Although the term 'maternity buddy' is used the buddy scheme is available to those on adoption, maternity/adoption support (paternity) or shared parental leave.

The buddy scheme is a flexible and informal arrangement that links an employee with a colleague who has personal experience of being pregnant and on maternity leave whilst working for WYFRS or other organisations, 'the buddy'. Buddy volunteers are from both Green and Grey book employee groups.

Role of the Buddy

The buddy scheme is an informal arrangement, and the role may differ depending on individuals, but it is thought that having a named buddy will be a source of informal support and advice about matters relating to maternity leave and subsequent returning to work. For instance, the availability of childcare vouchers, nursery provision, work-life balance, being a working parent, experiences of flexible working and re-training are likely to be discussion points. Buddies can help signpost a pregnant employee to the appropriate sources for personalised advice about their specific maternity entitlements. Making use of the buddy scheme will allow the employee to benefit from the first-hand experience the buddy has of making the transition to the dual role of parent and employee.

The scheme is entirely confidential and buddies are bound by WYFRS guidance around confidentiality – disclosure of anything discussed within buddy meetings will only occur if the buddy is concerned about the employee's health and wellbeing.

Buddies are not advocates and should only be offering emotional and moral support. If employees are having issues with work related matters, specific employees, or require information or advice on terms and conditions (e.g. entitlements to leave or pay), policy or procedure or regarding their health, then the usual processes apply, i.e. line manager, welfare officer, HR and Occupational Health.

Employees should contact their HR Business Partner to receive an up-to-date list of all buddies.

2.2.8 Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave enables mothers/adopters to commit to ending their maternity/adoption leave and pay at a future date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and statutory pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner.

Shared parental leave must be taken in blocks of at least 1 week. The employee can request to take shared parental leave in 1 continuous block (in which case WYFRS is required to accept the request as long as the employee meets the eligibility and notice requirements), or as a number of separate blocks of leave (in which case the employee needs WYFRS' agreement).

To be able to take shared parental leave, an employee and their partner must meet various eligibility requirements and have complied with the relevant curtailment, notice and evidence requirements. This includes the mother/adopter shortening their maternity/adoption leave.

Employees can refer to the WYFRS policy on shared parental leave, where they will find full details of the eligibility requirements, as well as instructions as to how the mother's/adopters maternity leave can be curtailed. The WYFRS policy on shared parental leave details the notice periods with which employees must comply and the evidence they must provide to WYFRS. The policy also contains more details on employees' entitlement to shared parental leave and pay.

The mother/adopter and the partner should ensure that they are each liaising with their own employer when making requests for shared parental leave.

Employees are requested to contact their HR Business Partner, at the earliest opportunity, if they are considering taking shared parental leave.

(See Shared Parental Leave Policy [HRPOL053](#))

2.3 During Maternity Leave

2.3.1 Contact during Maternity Leave

WYFRS may maintain reasonable contact with the employee, from time to time, during their maternity leave. This may be to discuss the employee's plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made, training to be given to ease the employees return to work or simply to update the employee on developments at work in their absence. The manager and employee should agree regularity of contact and methods of communication.

Employees may also wish to liaise with their HR Business Partner to share their contact details with other employees who are currently pregnant or on maternity leave to establish support networks.

2.3.2 Maternity/Adoption Support Leave (Paternity Leave) Procedure

Employees must notify WYFRS:

- Their intention to take maternity/adoption support leave the end of the 15th week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable.
- When the baby/adoption is due.
- Whether they wish to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave.
- When they want the leave to start.

The maternity/adoption support leave must be taken:

- Within 56 days of the child's birth or placement.
- After the child's birth or placement.
- In 1 complete block and consecutive weeks.

Maternity/adoption support leave comprises:

- 1 weeks' contractual maternity/adoption support leave and pay based on the employees actual salary, plus.

- 1 week's statutory leave and pay based on an amount set annually by the government, which is the same as statutory maternity pay.

Employees must complete form '[HRFRM207 Application for Maternity Support Leave \(for Grey book employees\)](#)' or '[HRFRM207a Application for Maternity Support Leave](#)' (for Green book employees), found on the HR team site under forms, with provisional dates of leave to be taken and submit to HR via post or email Leave.Leave@westyorksfire.gov.uk. If due to circumstances the dates of maternity support leave required change, Grey book employees are required to immediately contact the Central Staffing Team to amend their dates as this impacts resourcing. Green book employees should contact their line manager and HR to amend any maternity support leave dates.

2.3.3 Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

Employees can agree to work for WYFRS for up to 10 days/occasions during their maternity/adoption leave without that work bringing their maternity leave to an end and without loss of a week's statutory maternity/adoption pay. These are known as 'keeping-in-touch' days.

Employees have in the past utilised KIT days during their maternity/adoption leave for the purposes of re-induction/phased return to work, undertake their re-training pack, to attend courses or handover meetings with maternity cover employees.

For health and safety purposes employees are not permitted to use their KIT days during their compulsory maternity leave period comprising of the first 2 weeks after childbirth.

WYFRS has no right to require employees to carry out any work and employees have no right to undertake any work during their maternity/ adoption leave, any arrangement to work a KIT day must be subject to mutual agreement. For flexibility purposes the employee can be paid hourly for any work undertaken; payment will be their normal daily rate for each day of work. This rate of pay will be the same regardless of receiving any maternity/adoption pay or not at the time of carrying out the 'keeping in touch' days. For employees on the flexi time system, payment for KIT days will be capped at 74 hours which equates to 10 days.

To record a working time for a KIT day, employees are required to select the drop down menu called 'Keeping in Touch Day 0803' on SAP employee self-service and input times worked to allow HR to make arrangements for payment.

2.3.4 Pension

During any period of:

- Paid maternity leave (including any period when only statutory maternity pay is paid);
- Paid adoption leave (including any period when only statutory adoption pay is paid);
- Any unpaid maternity or adoption leave during the first 26 weeks of absence;
- Statutory maternity/adoption support leave (paternity leave);

the Firefighters Pension Scheme (1992, 2006 and 2015) or Local Government Pension Scheme benefits will continue to build up as if the pension scheme member was working normally on full pay. Employees must continue to pay pension contributions on the pay, if any, they are receiving.

Any period of unpaid maternity or adoption leave beyond 26 weeks will not automatically count towards an employee's pension. Instead the employee will have a break in their pension membership.

To avoid a break in pension membership, pension scheme members can choose to pay back the pension contributions they have missed for the period of unpaid absence.

Cost to Pay Back the Pension Contributions for the Period of Absence

The cost of paying back is based on the scheme members "Assumed Pensionable Pay", i.e. the pensionable pay the employee would have received but not for the leave.

WYFRS Pensions department will contact scheme members within 30 days of their return to work from maternity/adoption leave with:

- The confirmed dates of leave.
- In instances a period of unpaid leave has been taken, a notification to confirm the break in pension membership.
- The cost to buy back the unpaid leave period.
- A form to confirm the member's decision about buying back the unpaid leave period.

Scheme Members is Paying Extra

If a scheme member has entered into a contract with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to:

- Buy extra pension (called Additional Regular Contributions);
- Count pre 6 April 1988 membership for a surviving nominated co-habiting partner's pension;
- Buy additional LGPS membership (called Added Years);
- Buy Prudential death in service cover;

the member must continue to make the contributions they had agreed to in their contract, as if they were not on leave.

If a pension scheme member fails to make arrangements for the contributions to be made, the contract will stop. If a member is paying Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs), their contributions will be deducted when they are receiving pay. If they pay no longer covers the contribution agreed, the contributions will stop and members will need to speak to Prudential about any future contributions.

What if a scheme member has more than one job?

The member will be given the options available for each employment.

2.4 After Maternity Leave – Return to Work

If employees decide to return to work before the end of the 52 week maternity leave period, they must notify WYFRS in writing, giving at least 8 weeks' notice, using form '[HRFRM262 – Maternity Leave Return To Work](#)'. Similarly employees on adoption leave who are returning to work before the end of 52 week adoption leave period, must notify WYFRS in in writing, giving at least 8 weeks' notice, using form '[HRFRM264 – Adoption Leave Return to Work.](#)'

2.4.1 Medical and Retraining

Prior to returning to full operational duties following birth, all Grey book employees must undergo a review by WYFRS Authority Medical Adviser (AMA).

Operational employees must contact the Occupational Health to book a 'return to work' medical, at least 8 weeks prior to their return, in order to be declared fit to work and undertake their re-training.

Operational employees who have been absent from operational duties for 13 weeks or more will be required to undertake a full skills gap analysis and complete an appropriate re-training programme prior to their return to full operational duties. Occupational Health will advise Training Support if the employee is fit to undertake their re-training pack.

The re-training pack must be obtained through the Training Support Department, who, in addition to issuing the pack, will also offer guidance in liaison with the employee's Station Commander. Upon the employee successfully completing their re-train pack, Training Support will advise Employee Resources who will place the employee back to their watch or normal place of work.

For advice on exercising safely during; pregnancy, maternity leave and fitness for return to work employees should contact the Authority Fitness Advisers.

Green book and Control employees should review their risk assessment with their manager. Prior to returning to work, Green book/Control employees are encouraged to contact Occupational Health to discuss any work related post-natal health concerns. The risk assessment will also be reviewed for employees to ensure that post-natal considerations and arrangements are appropriate.

Control employees should contact their Station Manager to organise their return to work and undertake their re-train pack.

2.4.2 Breast-Feeding

To comply with the guidance published in the '[Medical & Occupational Evidence for Recruitment and Retention into the FRS \(CFOA\)](#)', an employee will remain on non-operational duties until breast-feeding has ceased.

Operational employees who wish to breast-feed their child are not permitted to return to operational duties whilst they are breast-feeding. This is due to the risk of chemical contamination of breast milk from any processes or working conditions whilst on operational duties. Thus, all Operational employees, who are breast-feeding, will immediately be required to undertake a risk assessment and be placed on non-operational duties on their return from maternity leave for health & safety purposes. This status will continue until the employee is no longer breast-feeding, in accordance with current guidance.

The Health and Safety Executive recommends to employers that it is good practice to provide suitable rest facilities for workers who are pregnant or breast-feeding to rest, and where necessary to lie down.

If an employee is breast-feeding and needs to express their breast milk, the manager should make every effort to provide the appropriate arrangements to find a suitable lockable room, which has a safe and healthy environment and provides the necessary privacy. Ideally this room should be within easy access of toilet and washroom facilities. Facilities should be made available so that the employee may store expressed milk in a lockable container in a fridge.

Managers must carry out a specific risk assessment when an employee provides written notification that they are breast-feeding. Managers should contact their HR Business Partner with regards to arrangements for breast-feeding and seek advice from Equality and Diversity team for guidance around suitable quiet rooms.

2.4.3 Flexible Working

WYFRS believes that flexible working can increase employee motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity. All employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered by the WYFRS.

Employees may request to work flexibly on a permanent basis by way of reduced hours or job share following their return from maternity leave. Any flexible working request must be put in writing using form '[HRFRM204 – Request for Flexible Working](#)'. Employees will need to detail the effect any change may have on WYFRS and how that effect may be dealt with and possible solutions.

Any request for flexible working will need to be considered and the impact of the request on service provision assessed before approval is granted, as any form of flexible working can have implications. The HR Business Partner can be contacted if there are any queries.

Alternatively, employees may wish to request to work flexibly on a temporary basis which is for a maximum of 6 months. This facility allows employees to vary their hours in order that they can cope with difficult or changed personal circumstances. Any temporary flexible working request must be put in writing using form '[HRFRM202 – Temporary Negotiated hours](#)'.

If an employee makes a request to change to work flexibly on a permanent basis, including part-time or change in working pattern, managers must seriously consider the request in line with the Flexible Working Policy. When an employee makes such a request, both employer and employee must follow a specified procedure with strict time limits. HR will be available for advice and guidance in such instances.

Employees are encouraged to discuss any intention to undertake a flexible working arrangement prior to their maternity leave to allow WYFRS time to fully consider flexible working solutions and in all cases give as much notice as possible to assist their manager in facilitating a change.

(See Flexible Working Policy [HRPOL010](#))

2.4.4 Childcare Vouchers

WYFRS is very keen to help all of its working parents with their childcare requirements and due to government legislation have implemented a childcare vouchers salary sacrifice scheme so that employees can benefit financially from the Income Tax and National Insurance contribution exemptions. These exemptions allow employees to save on the cost of childcare (depending on the level of Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions the employee currently pays).

This allows employees to swap or "sacrifice" some of their gross income for childcare credit in a special childcare account held with our chosen provider. Because this credit is coming from the employee's gross income, essentially, employees are using some of their Income Tax and National Insurance contributions to meet some of their childcare costs allowing them to make the savings.

It is important employees consider the impact of childcare vouchers on Tax Credits and state benefits in order to make an informed decision. The childcare vouchers scheme will close to new entrants from April 2018. For further information about childcare vouchers and an application please contact the Finance department.

2.4.5 Other Resources

Employees may find the following resources useful:

- [NHS Guide to Pregnancy and Babies](#)

- [National Childbirth Trust](#)
- [Pregnancy Information from NHS Choices](#) (NHS Choices account registration required)
- [Maternity/Birth Centres from Which](#)
- [Royal College of Midwives](#)
- [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#)
- [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#)
- [Information About Screening Tests in Pregnancy](#)
- [The Breast-Feeding Network](#)
- [The Associate of Breast-Feeding Mothers](#)
- [Information about Car Seats](#)
- [Fitness Training & Pregnancy - How to Start or Continue Exercising In a Safe Manner](#) (Intranet link)
- www.gov.uk (For information on financial support with childcare costs)

2.4.6 Useful Contact Details

HR Business Partners

Advice on terms and conditions (e.g. entitlements to leave or pay), policy or procedure for maternity, adoption, maternity support (paternity) and shared parental leave scheme.

Farooq Latif, supporting

- Leeds District
- Property, Strategic Development, Transport & Logistics
- Finance

Email: Farooq.Latif@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 473795

Lindsey Winter, supporting

- Calderdale District
- Bradford District
- Ops Risk & Resilience, Ops Policy and Control at Service Delivery Centre

Email: Lindsey.Winter@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655744

Debbie Richardson, supporting

- Wakefield District
- Legal & Governance
- Employment Services

Email: Debbie.Richardson@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655891

Kailash Mistry, supporting

- Kirklees District
- Prevention & Protection at Service Delivery Centre
- Training Centre

Email: Kailash.Mistry@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 07795 965038

Occupational Health

Advice on booking a return to work medical and any work related post-natal health concerns.

Email: OccupationalHealth@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655746

Health and Safety

Advice on Health and Safety and undertaking risk assessments.

Email: Harry.Bond@westyorkshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655870

Email: Jeremy.Horn@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655788

Employee Resourcing

Arrangements for operational employees to be placed on shift/modified duties and SAP establishment moves.

Email: Employee.Resources@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 471773

Supplies

For alternative uniform sizes during pregnancy.

Email: Sue.Broomhead@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655781

Training Support

Guidance on re-training programmes for operational employees.

Email: Training.Support@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 473890

Central Staffing Team

Booking annual leave for operational employees.

Email: Central.Staffing@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 471761

Human Resources

Annual Leave queries for non-operational employees.

Email: Leave.Leave@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 473799

Control Employees

Booking leave and undertaking re-training programme.

Tel: 0113 2180307 to arrange with Control Station Commander

Equality and Diversity

Advice on equality and diversity issues.

Email: Equality.diversity@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655815

Finance Department

Information on Childcare Vouchers

Email: Alex.Wilkes@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 473819

Workforce Development

Guidance on the promotion process and make arrangements to receive information whilst on maternity/adoption/shared parental leave.

Email: Workforce.Development@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 473877

Vacancies

WYFRS internal and external vacancies on e-recruitment system.

https://static.wcn.co.uk/company/wyfrs/internal_search.html

External access to emails

<https://webmail.westyorksfire.gov.uk/owa>

ICT Department

Arrangements for access to WYFirespace front page (which includes vacancies) and other WYFirespace pages whilst on maternity leave.

Email: Helpdesk.Helpdesk@westyorksfire.gov.uk

Tel: 01274 655799

Authority Fitness Advisors

Advice on exercising safely during; pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.

Daniel.Campbell02@westyorksfire.gov.uk

0113 2822410

Matthew.Hindmarch01@westyorksfire.gov.uk

07557006145

Finding Local Childcare

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-parenting/finding-childcare>

3 Appendix A - Pregnancy and Maternity Leave Planner for Employee and Manager

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
BEFORE MATERNITY LEAVE			
	Managers and employees must read WYFRS’s Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Policy and Guidance.	To gain an overview of the process, provisions and support an employee may be entitled to. The document also details what will be required from both the employee and their manager at different stages of the process.	
The employee becomes aware they are pregnant	All employees must inform their line manager.	To ensure appropriate support and arrangements can be provided, the manager must carry out a risk assessment and seek medical advice as to whether the employee can continue to perform their current duties.	
	Operational employees must inform their manager <u>as soon as possible</u> and stop attending operational incidents.	To be placed on non-operational duties by Employee Resources via their First Call Officer or line manager, to protect the health and safety of the employee and their unborn child.	
	Manager to discuss with employee at what point to share the news of the employee’s pregnancy.	To allow the employee to share their news with colleagues first hand, or keep confidential as long as possible.	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
	<p>Manager to appoint a welfare officer of employee's choice.</p> <p>The employee/ must inform their HR Business Partner.</p>	<p>To put welfare arrangements in place and initiate a welfare log to support the employee.</p> <p>a. To arrange a meeting with the pregnant employee to talk through timescales and outline pay and leave entitlements.</p> <p>b. To receive an up to date list of maternity buddies for a source of informal support on matters relating to pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work.</p>	
	<p>Employees may ask their Dentist (if they need treatment).</p>	<p>To apply for free treatment.</p>	
	<p>Employees may ask their Doctor/Midwife for Maternity Exemption application 'Form FW8'.</p>	<p>To apply for free prescriptions.</p>	
<p>After approximately 25 weeks of pregnancy</p>	<p>Employees must ask their Doctor/Midwife for 'Form MATB1' and send this to their HR Business Partner.</p>	<p>To receive maternity pay when maternity leave starts.</p>	
<p>15 weeks before expected week of birth</p>	<p>Employees must provide notification to their HR Business Partner using form 'HRFRM261 Maternity Leave</p>	<p>To protect their right to maternity pay and return to work.</p>	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
	<p>Declaration of their maternity start date and if they intend to return to work. Employees can change their start date by giving WYFRS 28 days' notice.</p>		
<p>11 weeks before the expected week of birth</p>	<p>This is the earliest time an employee may voluntarily start their maternity leave (and start receiving Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance).</p>	<p>Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance paid from now.</p>	
<p>Arrangements before commencing maternity leave</p>	<p>Employee and manager to discuss and agree plans for maternity arrangements.</p>	<p>To discuss maternity cover workload during period of leave; and any handover arrangements.</p>	
	<p>Employees are encouraged to discuss any intention to undertake a flexible working arrangement prior to their maternity leave with their manager and HR Business Partner.</p>	<p>To allow WYFRS time to fully consider flexible working solutions and in all cases give as much notice as possible to assist their manager in facilitating a change.</p>	
	<p>Employee and manager to discuss and agree how the employee may wish to use their annual leave leading up</p>	<p>To ensure any annual leave accrued during maternity leave is taken. Employees are encouraged to take any outstanding leave due to them before the commencement of maternity</p>	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
	to and/or following their maternity leave period.	leave. However, if this is not possible, this may be carried over to the next leave year.	
4 weeks before the expected birth date	If the employee is absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy, during the 4 weeks before the expected week of childbirth, they must notify WYFRS in writing or email of this as soon as reasonably practicable.	For welfare purposes, if the employee is absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness, after the beginning of the 4th week, before their expected week of childbirth, their maternity leave will start automatically.	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
During Maternity Leave			
AFTER THE BIRTH			
As soon after the birth as the employee can	a. Register the baby's birth	To obtain birth certificate and NHS card	
	b. Send off application form for child benefit/working families tax credit.	To receive Child Benefit/working families tax credit.	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
By 6 weeks after the birth	Register baby's birth.	This is the latest date a new mother can register her baby's birth.	
If the baby is born prior to the official maternity leave date	Employee to notify their HR Business Partner of their baby's date of birth date and provide birth certificate.	To amend maternity pay and leave start date and re-allocate annual leave.	
	Employee and manager to discuss and agree the use of Keeping-In-Touch days (optional).	For re-induction to work/phased return to work, undertake re-train pack (for operational employees), attend courses or handover meetings with maternity cover employees.	
3 months after the birth	Claim Child Benefit.	This is the latest date to be paid Child Benefit from the date of the baby's birth.	
8 weeks before returning to work (at the latest) – If the employee intends to return to work before 52 weeks of maternity leave	Employees must notify their HR Business Partner giving at least 8 weeks' notice, using form ' HRFRM262 – Maternity Leave Return To Work '.	To protect the employee's right to return to work on date of their choosing, within their 52 week maternity leave period. To ensure arrangements are in place to facilitate a smooth return to work.	
At least 8 weeks prior to return	Operational employees must contact the Occupational Health Unit to book a 'return to work' medical	To be declared fit to work and undertake re-training to return to operational duties.	
39 weeks after commencing maternity leave	Return to work no later than 39 weeks of maternity leave (optional).	Statutory and occupational maternity pay or maternity allowance expires after 39 weeks. Pregnant employees are entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave, if an employee wishes to continue on maternity leave after 39 weeks,	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
		any remaining maternity leave will be unpaid.	
Upon being declared fit to return to work by the WYFRS Authority Medical Advisor	Operational employees must contact Training Support .	To undergo a full skills gap analysis and obtain an appropriate re-training package and guidance. To discuss arrangements for undertaking their training pack.	
Upon successful completion of re-train pack	Operational employees to contact Employee Resources.	To be placed on their shift on SAP.	
	Control employees to contact their Station Manager.	To organise return to work and undertake re-training.	
	Green book and Control employees should review Section B of their risk assessment with their manager.	To ensure that post-natal considerations and return to work arrangements are appropriate.	
	Green book and Control employees are encouraged to contact Occupational Health.	To discuss any work related post-natal health concerns.	
52 weeks after commencing maternity leave	Return to work no later than 52 weeks of maternity leave.	To protect the employees' right to return. This is the latest time the employee has the right to return to their job.	

WHEN	WHAT TO DO	WHY	DATE COMPLETED
AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE – RETURN TO WORK			
	Contact the Finance department to obtain information about Childcare Vouchers.	To check if the employee can benefit financially from the Income Tax and National Insurance contribution exemptions. These exemptions allow employees to save on the cost of childcare (depending on the level of Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions the employee currently pays).	

4 Appendix B - Calculator for Showing Key Dates for Maternity Leave

Please click on the link to use the [Maternity Leave Key Dates Calculator](#).

5 Appendix C - Flow Chart - Health and Safety Requirements during Pregnancy, Maternity Leave and on Return to Work



