

APPENDIX 3- G11 NEW & EXPECTANT MOTHERS- POEL12

HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS AT WORK

INTRODUCTION

Employers have a duty to protect the health and safety of women of childbearing age who are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months or who are breastfeeding. This includes reviewing existing risk assessments which may include specific risks to new and expectant mothers.

Although most employees will be able to carry out their normal duties when they are pregnant or have recently given birth, special arrangements will have to be made for some expectant mothers and breast-feeding mothers. This is to ensure that they are not exposed to any significant risk.

Your manager has the responsibility of deciding whether special arrangements are needed to take account of your health and safety needs. Your manager is also responsible for giving you information about:

- any risks identified for women of child bearing age
- significant risks if you could be pregnant or have recently given birth or are breast-feeding
- actions that will be taken to make sure that you are not exposed to the risks that could cause harm

Although you do not have to tell your manager that you are pregnant or breastfeeding, it is important (for your and your child's health, safety and protection) that you inform him/her (in writing) as early as possible. Until you have given notification, no action can be taken other than that arising from the risk assessment for all employees. You may also be asked to provide a certificate from your GP or midwife.

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If you have any concerns about your health and safety at work during your pregnancy, whether or not they are mentioned in this leaflet, please contact your manager, immediate supervisor or one of our counsellors in the [Employee Support and Counselling Service](#).

This document is intended to be a general explanatory leaflet. Consequently, it cannot give detailed medical information about a particular situation at any time. It is important, therefore, that if you have any particular queries relating to your own health or medical circumstances, you should seek medical advice from your own doctor or midwife or the appropriate specialist.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION OF PREGNANCY, HAVING GIVEN BIRTH IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS OR WHILE BREAST FEEDING

If additional risks are not initially identified the situation will be regularly monitored and reviewed. If a risk is identified, the first step is to remove it if possible. If this is not possible, consideration will be given as to whether your working conditions or hours can be adjusted. If this is not possible, the possibility of offering suitable alternative work will be considered. This will be on the same terms and conditions of employment.

If suitable alternative work is not available, you will be suspended from work on paid leave, for as long as is necessary to protect your health and safety or that of your child. All of these actions will be monitored on a regular basis. You will be involved in this process, and it is important that you pass on any advice you have received from your doctor or midwife.

POSSIBLE RISKS

There may be risks from different physical, biological and chemical agents, working conditions and processes. These risks will vary depending on your health and at different stages of your pregnancy or on your return to work.

Some of the more common risks might be:

- lifting/carrying heavy loads (see [G28 Manual handling](#) or [G12 Moving and handling people](#))
- standing or sitting for long lengths of time
- exposure to infectious diseases, e.g. rubella, chicken pox, Parvo Virus*
- exposure to chemicals (see [*G27 Substances hazardous to health](#))
- exposure to bodily products such as blood, urine, faeces*
- infection from working with animals, e.g. lambing

- exposure to lead
- work related stress
- exposure to radioactive material (for more information [see here](#))
- threat of violence in the workplace (see [G15 Violence at work](#))
- long working hours (see [G7 Working time](#))
- excessively noisy workplaces (see [G29 Noise at work](#))
- use of Display Screen Equipment (See [G13 Display screen equipment](#) policy for more information and guidance on undertaking a DSE workstation assessment)

Your manager will discuss with you the risk assessment that is already in place for all employees and discuss whether any additional controls are necessary for you.

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REST FACILITIES

It is a requirement for pregnant and breastfeeding employees to have access to rest facilities. This may be the first aid room or a comfortable chair in a quiet place. It is good practice to have a private, healthy and safe environment for nursing mothers to express and store milk, but this is not a legal requirement. It is not suitable to use toilets for this purpose.

BREASTFEEDING

It is for you to decide how long you wish to breastfeed and returning to work does not mean you have to stop. Your manager will carry out a risk assessment and make arrangements with you prior to your return to work if you choose to continue to breastfeed.

Further guidance is detailed in the Department of Health leaflet:

[NHS Breastfeeding and Work](#)

GENERAL

Please speak to your manager if you have any concerns about your risk assessment or control measures. Alternatively you may wish to speak to your doctor/midwife or one of our Employee Support Counsellors.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available in the links below:

[HSE FAQs New and Expectant Mothers](#)

[Maternity Leave Policy and Guidance](#)

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