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WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

## Maternity Leave Frequently Asked Questions - 2024

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### **What is Maternity Leave?**

You are entitled to Maternity Leave if you are pregnant while you are in employment. All employees, including casual workers, are entitled to a basic period of Maternity Leave, and this is not affected by the length of your employment or the amount of hours you work each week.

### **How long is Maternity Leave?**

An employee is entitled to 26 weeks Maternity Leave. The employee can elect to take an additional 16 weeks Maternity Leave. This is known as Additional Maternity Leave. It must be taken immediately after the end of your basic Maternity Leave.

### **Is Maternity Leave paid by my Employer?**

Employers are not obliged to pay you while you are on Maternity Leave. Kaizen Workforce Solutions does not have a policy to pay employees for Maternity Leave. You may qualify for Maternity Benefit (see below) if you have enough PRSI contributions.

### **What is Maternity Benefit and how much is it?**

There is no obligation for an employer to pay an employee on Maternity Leave or Additional Maternity Leave. Employees on Maternity Leave are entitled to Social Welfare benefits. This is provided they have the necessary PRSI contributions.

Employees on Additional Maternity Leave are not entitled to Social Welfare benefits.

The Maternity Benefit in Ireland is €289 per week for 26 weeks ([As of January 2025](#)).

### **Do I qualify?**

To qualify for maternity benefit you must have;

- A) at least 39 weeks PRSI paid in the 12 months before your first day of your maternity leave or;
- B) at least 39 weeks PRSI paid since first starting work and at least 39 weeks PRSI paid or credited in the Relevant Tax Year or in the year following the Relevant Tax Year or
- C) at least 26 weeks PRSI paid in the Relevant Tax Year and at least 26 weeks PRSI paid in the Tax Year prior to the Relevant Tax Year



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### **When do I have to leave work and when can I return?**

You must stop working at least two weeks before the end of the week in which your baby is due, and you must not return to work for at least 4 weeks after the birth.

An employee must notify their employer in writing of their intention to return to work not later than four weeks before the date they expect to return.

### **Can I take Maternity Leave if my baby is born via Surrogacy?**

Kaizen currently have a Surrogacy leave policy for Internal Permanent Staff.

Employees are entitled to take up to 24 weeks unpaid leave from the date of their child being born. The same 4 week notice period applies for this leave.

There is currently no state funded payment for those taking surrogacy leave, therefore any time off would be unpaid from Kaizen and the state.

[\(Need Separate policy for Indirect employees\).](#)

### **Do I have to inform my Employer of my Pregnancy?**

Employees should advise their employer as soon as possible that they are pregnant and the expected date of Leave/Due date. The notification must not be later than four weeks before the commencement of Maternity Leave.

The employee must provide their employer with a medical or other appropriate certificate confirming the pregnancy and specifying the expected week of Delivery.

### **Can I take time off for Breastfeeding responsibilities?**

Employees who are breastfeeding are entitled to time off work or a reduction in working hours for breastfeeding. Once the employee who is breastfeeding informs their employer that they are doing so they are entitled to either breastfeeding breaks or to a reduction in their working hours, without loss of pay. This entitlement applies for the first two years following birth. The employer has to pay for the time off for the appropriate time off to meet the breastfeeding needs. This entitlement also applies to Transgender men.



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### **Can I take time off during Pregnancy for doctors' appointments?**

Pregnant employees who have medical or related appointments are entitled to take time off work during her normal working hours, without loss of pay, as is necessary to enable her to keep an appointment with their doctor. A Pregnant employee is entitled to time off work without loss of pay for the purposes of attending one set of antenatal classes. Employers must be notified on these dates.

### **Can I take Health & Safety Leave?**

During your pregnancy, your employer will carry out a pregnancy risk assessment. Your Employer will reduce or eliminate the perceived risk, as much as is possible, by adjusting the task or relocating pregnant individuals to other areas, if possible. If these options are not possible, Health and Safety leave will be considered. If applied during your pregnancy Health and Safety Leave will continue until commencement of your maternity leave.

During health and safety leave, you will get your normal wages for the first 3 weeks. After this, you may get Health and Safety Benefit from the Department of Social Protection depending on your PRSI contributions.

### **Can I work night shifts during Pregnancy?**

There is no evidence that working night shifts is harmful during pregnancy. However, if you are feeling unable to work with these conditions, it is advisable to speak with your doctor and alternative hours may be provided, if possible.

### **Am I entitled to Public Holidays & Annual Leave that occur while on my Maternity Leave?**

You are entitled to receive additional leave for any public holidays which occur during your Maternity Leave, including your Additional Maternity Leave. You will continue to accrue annual leave and public holiday entitlement while you are on Maternity Leave or Additional Maternity Leave.