16 The early weeks: your baby

The baby's birth must be registered within six weeks from the date of birth at your nearest Registry Office. The address will be in the telephone book under the name of your local authority (in Northern Ireland, look under 'Registration of births, deaths and marriages'). If you are married, you or the father can register the birth.
If you are not married you must go yourself, and if you want the father's name to appear on the birth certificate he must go with you.

Registering the birth

If you live in a different district from the one where your baby was born, the registrar will take details from you and then send them to the district where the birth took place. You will then be sent the birth certificate. You cannot claim benefits until you have a birth certificate

All babies born in England and Wales are now given a unique NHS number at birth. Midwives request and receive a newborn baby's NHS number. They then send this NHS number to the Registrar of Births and Deaths via your local Child Health Department.

An important change for unmarried couples
the right to be responsible for your child

- The law is changing to make it easier for unmarried fathers to get equal parental responsibility: from 1 December 2003, all you have to do is for both parents to **register the birth of your baby together.**
- Parental responsibility for your child gives you important legal rights as well as responsibilities. Without it, you don't have any right to be involved in decisions such as where they live, their education, religion or medical treatment. With parental responsibility, you are treated in law as the child's parent, and you take equal responsibility for bringing them up.
- Unlike mothers and married fathers, if you are not married to your baby's mother you do not automatically have parental responsibility for them.
- Before this change, you could only gain parental responsibility by later marrying the child's mother, signing an official agreement

'I think there must be something there even before the birth but it builds up as well. You know it takes time to form a bond and over the months and years it grows stronger.

'I think it has changed me. I think I've got a wider outlook on life now than I did before. And I can speak more openly to people. I can speak more freely. I'm more patient, too, whereas before I was very quick-tempered.'

with the mother or getting a court order. You can still get responsibility in these ways - you might want to think about this if you have other children.

Need help to decide what to do? Parentline Plus have a free helpline where you can talk through the options and ask for advice. Call them on **Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222** or **Textphone 0800 783 6783**

Crying

All babies cry. It's their way of saying that something isn't right. Sometimes you'll be able to find the reason for your baby's distress and deal with it. At other times all you can do is try to comfort or distract your baby. If it's not obvious why your baby is crying, think of possible reasons. Could it be:

- hunger?
- wet or dirty nappy?
- wind?
- colic?
- feeling hot, cold or uncomfortable?
- feeling tired and unable to sleep?
- feeling lonely and wanting company?
- feeling bored and wanting to play?

It could be none of these things. Perhaps your baby simply feels overwhelmed and a bit frightened by all the new sights, sounds and sensations in the early weeks of life and needs time to adjust. Holding your baby close and talking in a soothing voice or singing softly will be reassuring.

Movement often helps to calm down crying. Gently sway or rock your baby or take your baby for a walk in the pram or baby carrier or even for a ride in a car. Sucking can also be comforting. You can put your baby to your breast or give your baby a dummy if you wish. But if you do, make sure it is sterilised.

Do not dip the dummy in honey or sugar to make your baby suck – he or she will suck anyway. Using sugar will only encourage a craving for sweet things which are harmful to children's teeth.

Some babies do cry more than others and it's not really clear why. Don't blame yourself or your baby if he or she cries a lot. It can be very exhausting so try to get rest when you can. Share soothing your baby with your partner. You could ask a friend or relative to take over for an hour from time to time, just to give you a break. If there's no one to turn to and you feel your patience is running out, leave your baby in the cot, put on some music to drown the noise, and go into another room for a few minutes. Make yourself a cup of tea, telephone a friend or find some other way to unwind. You'll cope better if you do.

Never shake your baby. Shaking makes a baby's head move violently. It can cause bleeding and damage the brain. Put the baby down safely in a cot or pram and calm yourself; don't be angry with the baby. If you feel you're having difficulties in coping with your baby's crying, talk to your midwife or health visitor. Or contact CRY-SIS (see page 150), who will put you in touch with other parents who've been in the same situation.

If your baby's crying sounds different or unusual, it may be the first sign of illness, particularly if the baby isn't feeding well or won't be comforted. If you think your baby is ill, contact your doctor immediately. In an emergency, if you cannot contact your doctor, take your baby to the nearest hospital Accident and Emergency Department.

Sleeping

The amount babies sleep, even when they are very small, varies a lot. During the early weeks some babies sleep for most of the time between feeds. Others will be wide awake. As they grow older they begin to develop a pattern of waking and sleeping which changes as time goes by. Some babies need more sleep than others and at different times.

You'll gradually begin to recognise when your baby is ready for sleep and is likely to settle. Some babies settle better after a warm bath. Most sleep after a good feed. A baby who wants to sleep isn't likely to be disturbed by ordinary household noises, so there's no need to keep your whole home quiet while your baby sleeps. It will help you if your baby can get used to sleeping through a certain amount of noise.

See below for advice on sleeping positions.

Reducing the risk of cot death

Sadly, we don't yet know why some babies die suddenly and for no apparent reason from what is called cot death or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). This section lists, in detail, all the advice we now have for reducing the risk of cot death as well as other dangers such as suffocation. There are three ways in which you can reduce the risk:

- **always put babies to sleep on their backs;**
- **avoid dressing your baby too warmly or overheating the room;**
- **do not smoke or allow others to smoke near your baby or the room your baby sleeps in.**

A safe place to sleep

Babies should always be put to sleep on their *backs* unless there is clear medical advice to do something different. Babies sleeping on their backs are *not* more likely to choke, and the risk of cot death is greatly increased for babies sleeping on their fronts. Keep your baby's head uncovered and place your baby in the 'feet to foot' position to prevent your baby wriggling under the covers. Make the cot so that the covers reach no higher than your baby's shoulders.

The 'feet to foot' position means that the baby's feet are right at the end of the cot to prevent the baby wriggling under the covers.

Ask your doctor or midwife for the leaflet, *Reduce the risk of cot death*, published by the Department of Health and Foundation for Study of Infant Death (FSID).

The right temperature

Small babies are not very good at controlling their own temperature. It's just as important to avoid getting too hot as it is to avoid getting chilled. Overheating is known to be a factor in cot death. Remember:

- if the room is warm enough for you to be comfortable wearing light clothing (16–20°C) then it is the right temperature for your baby;

- give your baby one light layer of clothing (or bedding) more than you are wearing. If the room is too hot for you, keep your baby's clothes or bed-covering light;
- don't use duvets (quilts) until your baby is a year old – they get too hot;
- keep your baby's head uncovered when inside (unless it's very cold) as babies need to lose heat from their heads and faces;
- never use a hot water bottle or electric blanket as babies have delicate skin which can scald easily;
- ill or feverish babies do *not* need any extra bedding – in fact, they usually need less;

- put your baby back to sleep in their cot after a feed or a cuddle. There is a link between sharing a bed all night and cot death if you or your partner are smokers (no matter where or when you smoke), have recently drunk any alcohol, have taken medication or drugs that make you sleep more heavily, or are very tired. There is also a risk that you might roll over in your sleep and suffocate your baby.
- never sleep with a baby on a sofa or armchair.
- babies chill easily if it's cold, so wrap them up well when you go out, but **remember to take off the extra clothing when you come back inside**, even if you have to wake your baby to do it;
- avoid plastic sheets or bumpers, ribbons and bits of string from mobiles anywhere near your baby, who could get entangled in them;
- make sure there's no gap between the cot mattress and the sides of the cot which your baby's body could slip through;
- remove any loose plastic covering from the mattress which could come off and smother your baby.

You can protect your children by keeping their playing, sleeping and eating areas completely smoke free.

Clean air

Babies should not be exposed to tobacco smoke, either before birth or afterwards. If you, or anyone else who looks after your baby, smoke then don't smoke anywhere near the baby. Ask friends to smoke outside or before visiting you. It would be even better if everyone could make an effort to give up completely. Babies and young children who breathe in cigarette smoke are also more likely to get coughs, asthma and chest infections. For more advice on giving up smoking, see page 13.

Cot mattresses

There have been suggestions that toxic gases from fire-retardant materials found in some cot mattresses are another potential cause of cot death. However, a recent report examining this link found **no evidence** that cot mattresses contribute to cot death.

Following the advice given above will help to reduce the risk of cot death.

If your baby seems at all unwell, seek medical advice early and quickly.

Do remember that cot death is rare. Don't let worrying about cot death spoil the first precious months you have with your baby.

Nappies

Babies need their nappies changed fairly often, otherwise they become sore. Unless your baby is sleeping peacefully, always change a wet or dirty nappy and change your baby

before or after each feed, whichever you prefer.

Organise the place where you change your baby so that everything you need is handy (see page 85). If you're using terry nappies, your midwife or your friends can show you different ways of folding them. Experiment to find out which method is easiest and best for you.

Changing nappies

You need to clean your baby's bottom carefully each time you change a nappy to help prevent soreness.

- Take off the nappy. If it's dirty, wipe away the mess from your baby's bottom with tissues or cotton wool.
- Wash your baby's bottom and genitals with cotton wool and warm water and dry thoroughly. Or use baby lotion. For girls, wipe the bottom from front to back, away from the vagina so that germs won't infect the vagina or bladder. For boys, gently clean the foreskin of the penis, but don't pull it back; clean under the penis and the scrotum.
- You may want to use a cream such as zinc and castor oil cream which forms a waterproof coating to help protect the skin. Or you can just leave the skin clean and dry, especially with disposable nappies since cream may prevent them absorbing urine so well.
- Don't use baby powder as it can cause choking.
- If you're using a cloth nappy, fold it and put a nappy liner inside, if you wish. Pin the corners of the nappy together with a proper nappy pin or clip which won't spring open.
- If you use disposable nappies, be very careful not to get cream on the tabs or they won't stick down.
- Put on, or tie on, the plastic pants, if you're using a terry nappy.
- Wash your hands.

Nappy hygiene

Disposable nappies

If the nappy is dirty, flush the contents down the toilet. Roll up the nappy and re-tape it securely. Put it into a plastic bag kept only for this purpose. Fasten the bag and put it outside in your bin each day.

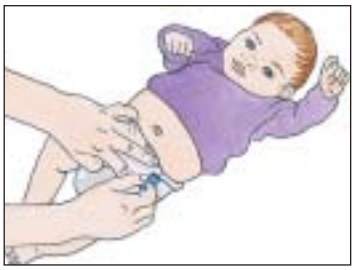
Cloth nappies

- If the nappy is dirty, flush the contents down the toilet and rinse off the nappy in the flushing water.
- Have a plastic bucket (with a lid) ready filled with water and the right amount of nappy sanitising powder. Follow the instructions on the packet. Make sure you keep the nappy powder out of reach of small children.
- Put the dirty nappy to soak in the bucket.
- Wash each day's nappies in very hot water. Don't use enzyme (bio) washing powders as these may irritate your baby's skin. Rinse very thoroughly. Don't use fabric conditioners as they may also irritate the skin.

Nappy rash

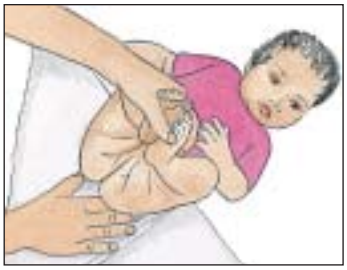
Most babies get soreness or a nappy rash at some time, but some have extra sensitive skins. If you notice redness or spots, clean your baby very carefully and change nappies more frequently. Better still, give your baby time without a nappy and let the air get to the skin (keep a spare nappy handy to mop up). You will soon see the rash start to get better.

Putting on a disposable nappy

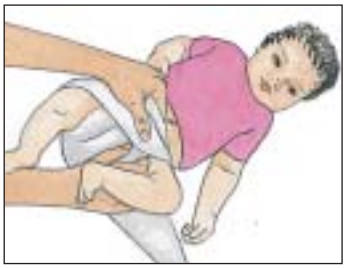


With disposables, the end with the sticky tapes goes under your baby's bottom. Fasten the tapes at the front.

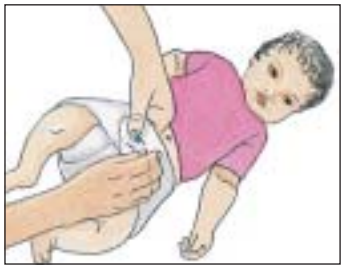
Putting on a cloth nappy



Lay your baby carefully on to a clean nappy and liner.



Bring the centre of the nappy between your baby's legs and then bring over the first side piece.



Bring over the second side piece and fasten all three pieces together with a nappy pin. Put on plastic pants over the top.

'You can't really explain, but it's a most wonderful thing to be a mum. To look after a baby and rear her, watching the different little things she does every day. It's just fantastic.'

If your baby does have a rash, ask your midwife or health visitor about it. They may advise you to use a protective cream. If the rash seems to be painful and won't go away, see your health visitor or GP.

Babies' stools

Immediately after birth, and for the first few days, your baby is likely to pass a sticky black-green substance. This is called meconium and it is the waste that has collected in the bowels during the time spent in the womb.

As your baby begins to digest milk, the stools will change, probably becoming more yellow or orange. The colours can be quite bright. Breastfed babies have quite runny stools. Bottle-fed babies' stools are firmer and smell more.

Babies vary a lot in how often they pass stools. Some have a bowel movement at or around each feed; some can go for several days without having a movement. Either can be normal.

Most small babies strain and go red in the face, or even cry, when passing a stool. This is normal and doesn't mean they are constipated so long as the stools are soft. If you are worried that your baby may be constipated, mention this to your midwife or health visitor.

What you find in your baby's nappies will probably vary from day to day and usually there is no need to worry about how runny the stools are, for example. But if you notice a marked change of any kind in your baby's bowel movements, such as the stools becoming very frequent and watery or particularly smelly or if they change colour to become green, white or creamy, for example, then you should get advice from your doctor, midwife or health visitor. See **Babies with jaundice after two weeks**, page 113).

Washing and bathing

Washing

You don't need to bath your baby every day but you should wash your baby's face, neck, hands and bottom carefully each day. You can do this on your lap or on a changing mat. Choose a time when your baby is awake and contented and make sure the room is warm. You'll need a bowl of warm water, some cotton wool, a towel and a fresh nappy.

1 Take off your baby's clothes except for the vest and nappy. Wrap the baby in a towel.

2 Gently wipe round each eye, from the nose side outwards, using a fresh piece of cotton wool for each eye.

3 Using fresh, moist cotton wool again, wipe out each ear but don't clean inside the ears.

4 Wash the rest of your baby's face and neck with moist cotton wool and gently dry. Wash and dry your baby's hands in the same way.

5 Take off the nappy and wash your baby's genitals, again with cotton wool and warm water. Dry very carefully and put on a fresh nappy. In the first week or so, you should also clean round the navel each day. Your midwife will show you how.

Bathing

Bath your baby two or three times a week, or more often if your baby enjoys it. Don't bath straight after a feed or when your baby is hungry or sleepy. Make sure the room is warm and that you have everything you need ready in advance.

1 Check that the water is not too hot, just comfortably warm to your wrist or elbow.

2 Undress your baby, except for a nappy, and wrap snugly in a towel. Wash your baby's face with cotton wool and water as described above. Don't use soap on your baby's face.

3 Wash your baby's hair with baby soap or liquid, supporting the head over the baby bath or basin. Rinse carefully.

4 If you're using baby soap, unwrap your baby and soap all over, still on your lap so you have a firm grip. Take the nappy off at the last minute. If you're using baby bath liquid add it to the water at this stage.

5 Put your baby gently into the water. Using one hand for support, gently swish the water to wash your baby without splashing the face. You should *never* leave your baby alone in the water even for a few seconds.

6 Lift your baby out and pat dry with the towel. Dry carefully in all the creases. If your baby's skin is dry, gently massage in some baby oil. Your baby may enjoy this anyway.

Never leave your baby alone in the bath.

If your baby seems frightened of the bath and cries, it may help to try bathing together. You may like to do this anyway. Make sure the water is only warm, not hot, and don't add anything to the water unless it's baby bath liquid.

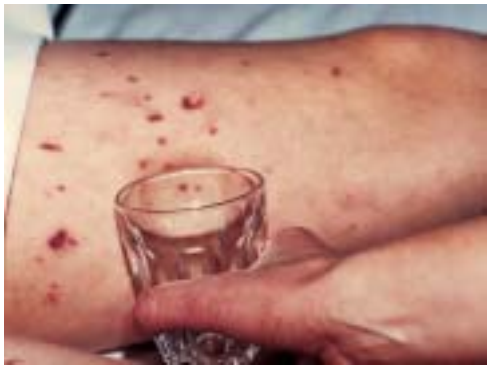
Illness

It's sometimes difficult to tell at first when a baby is ill but you may have a funny feeling that things aren't quite right. If you're at all worried, ask for help. You are not fussing. It's far better to be on the safe side, particularly with a very small baby. Trust your own judgement. You know your baby best.

Very urgent problems

Sometimes there are more obvious signs that your baby is not well. Contact your doctor at once if your baby:

- makes jerky movements – this is a fit or convulsion;
- turns blue or very pale;
- has quick, difficult or grunting breathing, or unusual periods of breathing, for example if your baby breathes with pauses of over 20 seconds between breaths;
- is very hard to wake, or unusually drowsy, or doesn't seem to know you;
- develops a rash of red spots which do not fade and lose colour (blanch) when they are pressed. (See the 'Glass Test'.) This may be the rash of meningococcal septicaemia – an infection in the blood. There may not be any other symptoms.



Your baby may need treatment very quickly. If you can't get hold of your GP at once, dial 999 for an ambulance or take your baby to the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest hospital as quickly as possible.

Problems that could be serious

- If your baby has a hoarse cough with noisy breathing, is wheezing, or cannot breathe through the nose.
- If your baby is unusually hot, cold or floppy.
- If your baby cries in an unusual way or for an unusually long time or seems to be in pain.
- If you notice any bleeding from the stump of the cord or from the nose, or any bruising.
- If your baby keeps refusing feeds.
- If your baby keeps vomiting a substantial part of feeds or has frequent watery diarrhoea. Vomiting and diarrhoea together may mean your baby is losing too much fluid and this may need prompt treatment.
- If your baby develops jaundice (looks yellow) when he or she is over a week old, or has jaundice which continues for over two weeks after birth (see page 113).

If you have seen your GP and your baby is not getting better or seems to be getting worse, tell your GP again the same day. If you become very worried and can't get hold of your GP or your GP can't get to you quickly enough, dial 999 for an ambulance or take your baby to the Accident and Emergency Department of the nearest hospital.

What you can do

- *You can contact your midwife or health visitor for advice. Keep their phone numbers where they can be reached easily.*
- *You can phone your GP. Your GP may be able to advise you over the phone or may suggest you bring your baby along to the next surgery. Most GPs will try to fit a young baby in without an appointment, although it may mean a wait in the surgery.*

If you're really worried about your baby, you should always phone your GP for help immediately, whatever the time of day or night. There will always be a doctor on duty even if it is not your own GP.

The 'Glass Test'

*Press the side or bottom of a glass **firmly** against the rash – you will be able to see if the rash fades and loses colour under the pressure (see photo). If it doesn't change colour, contact your GP immediately.*

Where to get support

Everyone needs advice or reassurance at some time or other when they are caring for a young baby, even if it's just to make sure that they are doing the right thing. Some problems just need talking over with someone. It's always better to ask for help than worry on your own. Do talk to your midwife or health visitor. As you grow more confident, you'll begin to trust your own judgement more. You will be able to decide which advice makes most sense for you and your baby and which suggestions you can safely ignore.

You will also want to talk to friends, relations or other mothers in a similar situation. You'll meet other mothers when you start taking your baby to the Child Health Clinic. Your health visitor will explain where this is and when you should go. The health visitor can also tell you about any mother and baby groups in the area. Or your local branch of the National Childbirth Trust (see page 147) or MAMA (Meet-A-Mum Association) (see page 148) may be able to put you in touch with other mothers nearby.

Sunshine

Young skin is delicate and very easily damaged by the sun. All children, no matter whether they tan easily or not, should be protected from the sun. Never leave your baby in a place where he or she could become overheated.

Always keep babies under six months out of direct sunlight, especially around midday, under trees, umbrellas, canopies or indoors.

A baby's skin burns easily, even in sun that would not affect your own. Cover up with hats, cool clothing and use a high protection sunblock (at least protection factor 15+) on any exposed skin to help protect your baby's skin from the sun.

Enjoying your baby

So far we have only talked about the things that have to be done to keep your baby warm, fed and safe. In the first weeks those things can grow to fill all the available time, but of course they're only a tiny part of what it means to be a parent. Every second that your baby is awake he or she is learning from you. Learning about what it feels like to be touched gently, about the sound of your voice and your very special smell, about what the world is like and whether it is a safe place to be and, above all, what it feels like to love and be loved.

Raising Your Child Bilingually

Being bilingual gives a child something special. The best advice is to introduce both languages as soon as your baby is born!

It is worth bearing in mind that children who speak more than one language enjoy several advantages such as:

- thinking more flexibly and creatively;
- learning other languages more easily;
- having a head start when learning to read;
- being able to enjoy two cultures;
- tending to perform better in tests and exams.

Perhaps either you and your partner, or both of you, speak another language. In that case, you are in an ideal position to introduce your child to two languages and to the benefits which that brings.

For more information on support groups for ethnic minorities contact Race Equality First (W) (see page 147); or for information on using the Welsh language with your baby contact The Welsh Language Board (see page 148).

17 Thinking about the next baby?

Difficulty conceiving

It can take several months or more to conceive even if it happened really quickly the first time.

If you're feeling very tired looking after the first baby, it may be that you are simply not making love at the right time. Re-read the section on ***Conception*** *(pages 21–5) to remind yourself when you are most likely to succeed. If nothing happens after a few months, and you feel anxious about it, talk to your doctor or family planning clinic.*

As you hold your new baby in your arms, it may be impossible to imagine that you will ever have the energy to go through it all again. Or you may be eager to increase your family as soon as you can. Either way, this is the time to stop and think about how you and your partner can prepare for the next pregnancy. Nobody can guarantee that a baby will be born healthy. However, if you had a low birthweight baby or a baby with a disability or special needs, or a miscarriage or stillbirth, you may be particularly anxious to do everything you can to create the best possible circumstances for your next pregnancy. You'll want to talk to your doctor about this. If both parents are in good health at the moment of conception, that is the best start you can possibly give to a new life. There are a few other steps you can take as well.

Fathers too

A bad diet, smoking, drinking and unhealthy working conditions can affect the quality of sperm and stop pregnancy from happening at all. Try to make your lifestyle as healthy as possible before you try to conceive.

Getting and staying healthy

Re-read Chapter 1, **Your health in pregnancy,** about diet, smoking, alcohol and exercise. The advice is even more effective if you start well before the next baby is on the way. You will need to prepare for pregnancy by taking extra folic acid from the time you start trying to conceive right up until you're 12 weeks' pregnant. Choose foods that

contain this important vitamin such as green, leafy vegetables and breakfast cereals and breads with added folic acid. (See symbol on this page.) To make sure you get enough, you should also take a 400 microgram (0.4 milligram) tablet every day. You can get these tablets from a supermarket or pharmacist. If you already have a baby with spina bifida, if you have coeliac disease or take anti-epileptic drugs, ask your GP for more advice, since you will need to take a bigger dose of folic acid.

Things to think about

Here are some things that are worth doing before having your next baby.

Rubella (German measles)
Rubella can badly damage a baby during pregnancy. If you were not already immune you should have been offered immunisation immediately after your baby was born. Before trying for another baby, think about having a blood test to check that you are immune to rubella. The blood test will measure if you have enough protection (antibodies) against rubella. Women with low or uncertain levels of antibodies can be immunised again.

Long-term medication
If either of you has a chronic illness or disability and has to take long-term medication, talk to your doctor in advance of pregnancy about any possible effects on fertility or pregnancy. It may be possible to cut down the dosage.

Diabetes and epilepsy
If you have diabetes or epilepsy, talk to your doctor in advance.

Medicines and drugs
These may endanger your baby's health. Don't take any over-the-counter drugs at the time you hope to conceive without making sure they are safe to take in pregnancy. Addictive drugs will affect your ability to conceive and, if you do conceive, are likely to damage your baby's health. See page 148 for organisations which can help you to stop.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
STIs can affect your ability to conceive as well as affecting you. If there is any chance that either of you has been in contact with an STI, it's important to get it diagnosed and treated before starting another pregnancy. STIs, including HIV and hepatitis B, can be passed on through:

- sexual intercourse with an infected person, especially without using a condom, and some STIs can be transmitted during sex without penetration;
- HIV and hepatitis B can also be passed on by sharing equipment for injecting drugs.

If you're HIV positive, you could pass the virus on to your baby in the womb, at birth or by breastfeeding. Up to 1 in 6 children born to mothers with the virus are likely to be infected (see box, page 54).

Work hazards

If you think that there may be a risk involved in your work ask for a risk assessment. If a significant risk is found your employer should take reasonable steps to remove the risk or prevent your exposure to it (see box). If the risk cannot be avoided your employer should offer you suitable alternative work on similar terms and condition as your present job. If no safe alternative is possible you should be suspended on full pay (ie given paid leave) for as long as necessary to avoid the risk.

Foods carrying this mark have added folic acid.

Vaginal birth after caesarean section

The majority of women who have had a Caesarean section are able to aim for a vaginal delivery for their next baby. This depends, however, on the reason for the first Caesarean section. Women who are thought to have a small pelvis, for example, may be advised to have a 'planned' (elective) Caesarean section next time. Your GP, or midwife, will be able to advise you. Most women who are advised to try for a vaginal delivery in subsequent pregnancies do have normal deliveries.

Some ways of avoiding risk

- *protective clothing*
- *avoiding breathing fumes or dust*
- *avoiding skin contact*
- *temporarily altering your working conditions or hours of work*

18 Rights and benefits

It's very important that you get help and advice as soon as you know that you're pregnant, to make sure that you know your rights and that you claim all the benefits to which you're entitled. Benefits have to be claimed on different forms, from different offices, depending on what you are claiming. The benefit rates are accurate at January 2005. Maternity rights are complex and sometimes change, so you should get further advice if you are unsure. There are many voluntary organisations that are happy to help, so don't hesitate to ask for advice or get an opinion. See the box on where to get advice.

Where to get advice and help

Working out what benefits and rights you are entitled to and making claims can be complicated. Get help if you need it. You can go to your local Jobcentre Plus (look in the business numbers section of the phone book under 'Jobcentre Plus'; in Northern Ireland 'Social Security Office' – soon to become 'Jobs and Benefits Office'). Or go to your local Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice centre (see page 147).

Citizens Advice Bureaux, law centres and other advice agencies will also be able to advise you about your rights at work. To find your local advice agencies, look in your Yellow Pages phone book under 'Counselling and Advice'.

Some local authorities have welfare officers. Phone your social services department (in Northern Ireland, local Health and Social Services Trust) and ask. Some national voluntary organisations offer information and advice on benefits and rights at work, for example, the Maternity Alliance and the National Council for One Parent Families (see pages 147 and 148).

If you are a member of a trades union, your staff representative or local office should be able to advise you on your maternity rights at work. The Equal Opportunities Commission can advise you if your problem is to do with sex discrimination (see page 147).

The Health and Safety Executive have a new publication for women explaining the health and safety rights that apply to pregnant women and women who have recently given birth. Some useful websites include:

www.dwp.org.uk (Department for Work and Pensions)
www.tiger.gov.uk (ACAS – guidance on employment rights)
www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk
www.hse.gov.uk (Health and Safety Executive)
www.maternityalliance.org.uk

Benefits for all

Prescriptions and NHS dental treatment

These are free while you are pregnant and for 12 months after you have given birth. Your child also gets free prescriptions until age 16. To claim for free prescriptions, ask your doctor or midwife for form FW8 and send it to your local NHS Business Services Centre (in Northern Ireland, ask for HC11A and send it to the Central Services Agency). You will be sent an Exemption Certificate which lasts until a year after your due date.

To claim after your baby is born (if you didn't claim while you were pregnant) fill in form A in leaflet P11 NHS Prescriptions (or in Northern Ireland read the leaflet HC11 – Help with Health Service Costs), which you can get from your doctor or Jobcentre Plus/Job and Benefit office in Northern Ireland (social security office/Jobs and Benefits office).

To claim for dental treatment, tick a box on a form provided by the dentist or show your Exemption Certificate (see above).

Child Benefit

What is it?
A tax-free benefit to help parents with the cost of caring for their children. It is payable for each child from birth until at least age 16.

Who gets it?
Every mother or the person responsible for the care of the child, but you must generally have been living in the United Kingdom for at least six months.

How much is it?
For your first child, £16.05 per week (£17.55 per week for your first child if you are a single parent who has been claiming since before June 1998). For other children you get £10.75 a week per child.

How do I claim?
You may get a claim pack inside the Bounty Pack which most new mothers are given in hospital. You can also get a claim pack from your Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Agency (social security office) or post office (also from the General Registrar's office in Northern Ireland). Fill in the forms and send them with your baby's birth certificate to the Child Benefit Centre (Child Benefit Office in Northern Ireland). The birth certificate will be returned to you. If you have access to the internet, you can apply online using the Child Benefit e-service: esd.dwp.gov.uk/dwp/index.jsp. This service is not available in Northern Ireland.

Child Benefit can be paid directly into your bank account or by a book of orders which you cash at the post office. It is usually paid every four weeks in arrears, but single parents and families on low incomes can choose to be paid weekly. You should start to claim Child Benefit within three months of your baby's birth otherwise you will lose some of the benefit.

Anything else?
Child Benefit can help to protect your State Retirement Pension if you stay at home to look after your child. For every complete year that you get Child Benefit, but you don't pay enough National Insurance contributions to count towards the basic pension, you automatically get 'Home Responsibilities Protection'.

Tax Credits

Two new tax credits were introduced in April 2003 – Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

Who gets it?
Child Tax Credit gives financial support for children. It can be claimed by lone parents or couples with one or more children. Nine out of ten families with children will get this new tax credit.

The Working Tax Credit helps people in lower paid jobs by topping up their wages. It will be paid through the wage packet.

Who gets it?
The **Working Tax Credit** can be claimed by single people or couples, with or without children, who work enough hours each week.

You must be working at least 16 hours each week if:

- you have dependant children and/or
- you have a disability.

Otherwise, you must be 25 or over and work at least 30 hours a week.

You can be treated as if you are working during Ordinary Maternity Leave if you are getting Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, and were working enough hours immediately before starting your maternity leave.

Help with childcare costs?
The Working Tax Credit can include a childcare element to help with the cost of approved childcare where a lone parent or both partners in a couple work for at least 16 hours a week, or one partner works and the other is disabled.

The childcare element is worth up to 70% of eligible childcare costs, up to a weekly maximum of £135 for one child and £200 for two or more children, paid to the main carer.

How do I claim Tax Credits?
Both Child Tax and Working Tax Credits can be claimed using the same form, obtained by phoning the helpline on 0845 300 3900 (0845 603 2000 Northern Ireland) or online at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits.

How much will I get?
The amount you get will depend on your current circumstances, for example, the number of children in your household, the number of hours you and your partner work, and your household's gross income for the last tax year. Claims for the tax year 2003–4 will initially be based on income for 2001–2. Awards will run until the end of the tax year, but if there is a change affecting the amount, you can ask for the award to be adjusted from the date of the change; for example, if your wages fall significantly during the current tax year because you are going on maternity leave, or following the birth of your baby. Maternity Allowance or the first £100 a week of Statutory Maternity Pay will be ignored as income.

Families with children, with an annual income of £50,000 or less, will get at least £545 a year. A single parent staying at home to look after one child will get £1,990 a year (£38.27 a week).

Anything else?
If you get tax credits you may also be able to get the £500 Sure Start Maternity Grant, reduced price formula milk for a baby under one and help with fares to hospital for treatment (including antenatal appointments).

Benefits if your income is low

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Income Support

What are they?
Weekly payments for people who are not in work and do not have enough to live on. If your family income falls below a set level, the benefit will 'top it up'. This means that you may be able to get Income Support even if you are already getting Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or some income from part-time work.

Who gets them?
You can claim **income-based JSA** if you are 18 or over and you are actively seeking work. Usually you would claim this benefit if you are living with your partner and you are both either unemployed or working part time. You should also claim it if you are single and unemployed but your baby has not been born yet.

If you are 16–17 and face severe hardship you may be able to claim before your baby is born. You should get further advice about this.

You can claim **Income Support** if you are 16 or over and cannot be available for work. This would be because you are a single parent or because you are 29 weeks pregnant or more. You may also get Income Support if you are single and pregnant and you are not well enough to work.

You cannot claim income-based JSA or Income Support if you have a partner who lives with you and works for 24 hours or more a week, or if you work for more than 16 hours a week, or if you have savings of more than £8000.

How much is it?
This depends on your age and the size of your family, and on what other income you have. If you are under 25 or have more than £3000 in savings, you get a lower rate. If you are claiming during pregnancy, you should let the Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Office (Jobs and Benefits office) know as soon as the baby is born, as your benefit will go up. For example:

- If you are a single parent aged 18 or over with one baby and no savings, you would be allowed an income of £99 per week. This means that any weekly income you already have (such as Child Benefit) would be topped up to the Income Support level for your family.
- If you are in a couple and one or both of you is aged 18 or over, you have one baby and no savings, you would be allowed an income of £129.20 per week. This means that any weekly income you already have (such as Child Benefit) would be topped up to the income-based JSA level for your family.

How do I claim?
To claim income-based JSA before your baby is born, you or your partner must both go to the Jobcentre in person (you may be able to claim by post if you live a long way from the Jobcentre). In Northern Ireland, claim income-based JSA at your local Social Security Office). After your baby is born, you will no longer need to sign on. Your partner can continue to claim for you and the baby.

To claim Income Support, fill in form A1, which you may get from a post office or a Jobcentre Plus (or in Northern Ireland from your Social Security Agency). Return the form to your local Benefits Agency/Social Security Agency (social security office).

The benefit is paid directly into your bank account, or by Giro, or by a book of orders which you cash at the post office. If you are claiming income-based JSA, you will have to go to the Jobcentre every fortnight (Social Security Office in Northern Ireland) to 'sign on' to show that you are available for work. If you are claiming Income Support, you do not need to 'sign on'.

Anything else?
If you get Income Support or income-based JSA or Pension Credit guarantee credit, you can claim other benefits, such as a £500 Sure Start Maternity

Grant, free milk and vitamins, help with fares to hospital, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. You may be able to get help with mortgage interest payments. See below for more information.

£500 Sure Start Maternity Grant from the Social Fund

What is it?
A lump sum payment (a grant which you do not have to pay back) to help buy things for a new baby.

Who gets it?
Pregnant women and new parents who are getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit where a disability or severe disability element is included in the award or Child Tax Credit payable at a rate higher than the family element.

How much is it?
£500 for each baby.

How do I claim?
Claim using form SF100 (Sure Start), which you can get from your local Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Agency (social security office). You can claim any time from 11 weeks before the due date until three months after the birth.

Part of the form will need to be completed by your midwife, GP or health visitor. This is to confirm when your baby is due or actually born, and that you have received advice about the health and welfare of yourself and your baby.

If you can't get Income Support, income-based JSA, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit until after your baby is born, claim the Sure Start Maternity Grant before your baby is three months old.

The Discretionary Social Fund

What is the Discretionary Social Fund?
The discretionary social fund provides grants and interest-free loans for needs that are difficult for people to meet out of their weekly benefits or regular income.

What are they and who gets them?
There are three types of payments available:

- Community care grants for people getting income support (IS) or income-based JSA.
- Budgeting loans are interest-free, repayable loans for people getting income support (IS) or income-based JSA for at least 26 weeks.
- Crisis loans are interest-free, repayable loans for people (whether on benefits or not) unable to meet their immediate short-term needs in a crisis.

How much are they?
This depends on your personal circumstances, your ability to pay and on how much money is available. Social Fund payments are not a right and there is a limited amount of money to be distributed to all those who apply.

How do I claim?
For information about which Social Fund payment to claim and how, contact you local Jobcentre Plus. More information is also available in leaflets SB16 (Guide to the Social Fund) and GL 18 (Help from the Social Fund).

Loans have to be repaid at a set amount per week, which will be taken directly from your income if you are claiming other benefits. The amount you have to repay per week depends on the size of the loan, the size of your income and any other debts you may have.

Anything else?

- A Community Care Grant does not have to be paid back.
- You cannot get a Budgeting loan or a Crisis Loan for more than £1,000 and the total you owe the Social Fund cannot be more than £1,000.
- Savings of more than £500 will usually affect how much you can get (£1,000) if you or your partner are aged 60 or over.

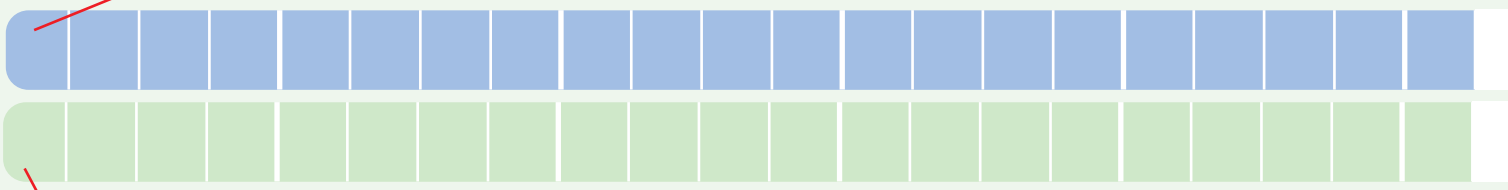
Housing Benefit – help with your rent

(in Northern Ireland this will help with your rent and/or rates)

What is it?
Housing Benefit will help you pay your rent (in Northern Ireland rent and/or rates) if you are on income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, or have a low income. If you are a council/Housing Executive tenant it will be paid direct to the council/Housing Executive; if you are a private tenant, it will be paid either to you or direct to your landlord. In Northern Ireland if you are an owner occupier Housing Benefit will be paid in the form of a rate rebate administered by the Rate Collection Agency.

In this box, write in the date of the Sunday before the first day of your last period. (If your last period started on a Sunday, write in that date.) Then work along the top row filling in the dates of each successive Sunday.

THE TIMING OF YOUR RIGHTS AND BENEFITS IN PREGNANCY IS VERY COMPLICATED, SO USE THIS CHART AS A ROUGH GUIDE ONLY.



Write in the first day of your last period here. Then work along the row filling in the remaining boxes. Each box represents a week. Write in the dates week by week until you get to the date your baby is due.

How much is it?
It depends on the rent you pay, average rents in your area, the size of your home, your income, savings, other benefits, your age and your family size. It may not be the same amount as the rent you are actually paying. You cannot get Housing Benefit if you have savings of more than £16,000, and the amount you get is reduced if you have savings of more than £3000.

How do I claim?
If you're getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Income Support you will get a Housing Benefit claim pack with your JSA/Income Support claim form. Otherwise, get a form from your local council. In Northern Ireland if you are a tenant get claim form HB1 from your Northern Ireland Housing Executive district office or if you are an owner occupier get claim form F1 from the Rate Collection Agency (RCA), Londonderry House, 21–27 Chichester Street, Belfast BT1 4JJ, tel: 02890 25 2757 or your local RCA.

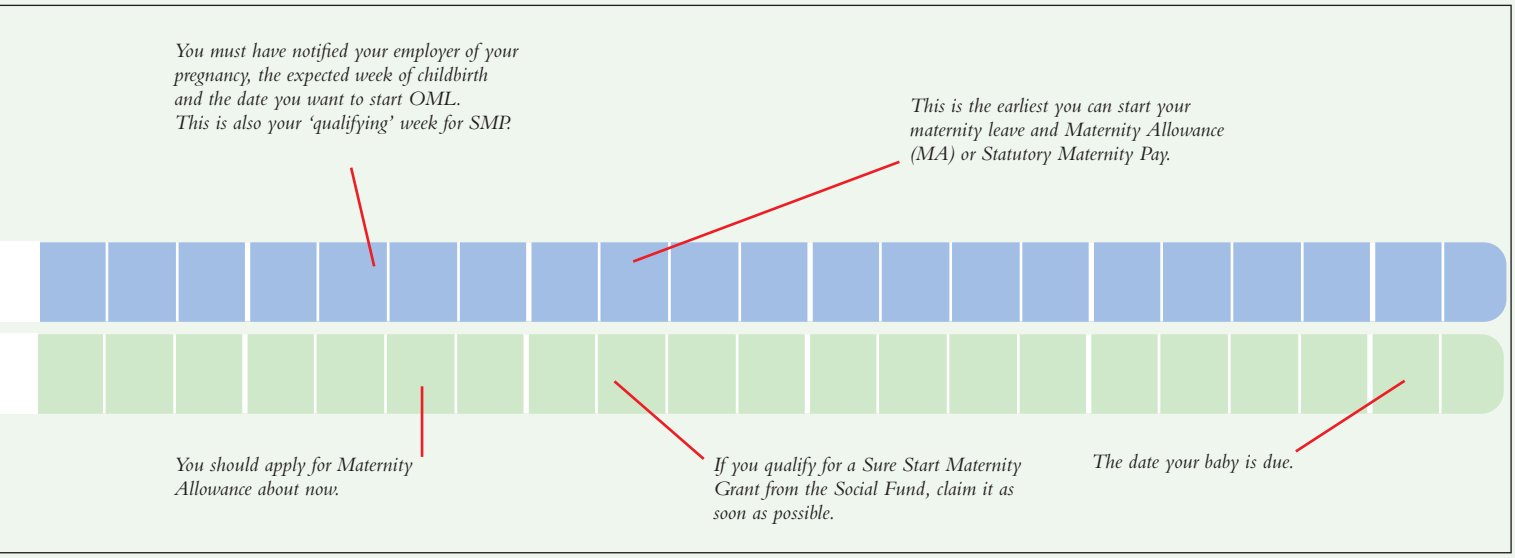
HELP WITH MORTGAGE INTEREST REPAYMENTS

Who gets it?
If you've got a mortgage and you're on income-based JSA or Income Support, you may be able to get help with your interest payments, although there is usually a waiting period during which you won't get any help.

How much is it?
You can only get help with interest payments (not repayments of capital or contributions to a linked PEP, endowment or insurance policy) and the

HAVE YOU CLAIMED EVERYTHING?

You can claim / If you get	Child Benefit	Free prescriptions	Free dental treatment	£500 Sure Start Maternity Grant	Social Fund loans	Council Tax Benefit (not NI) & Housing Benefit	Help with mortgage	Free milk	Free vitamins	Fares to hospital
Income-based JSA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income Support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low income	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
All mothers	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



amount is usually based on a standard average interest rate (which may not be the same as the interest you are paying).

If you took out your mortgage before 2 October 1995, you will get no help for eight weeks, half of the allowable interest for the next 18 weeks and then all the allowable interest after that.

If you took out your mortgage after 1 October 1995, you will get no help for 39 weeks and then all the allowable interest from week 40 of your claim. If you claim benefit because of the death of your partner or because your partner has left you and you have at least one child under 16, you are treated as if you took out your mortgage before 2 October 1995.

How do I claim?
Once you have claimed income-based JSA or Income Support, your Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Agency (social security office) will automatically send you a form MI12 about your housing costs shortly before they become payable. You fill out part of the form and then send it to your mortgage lender to fill out the rest. The money will either be paid to you as part of your income-based JSA or Income Support, or it will be paid directly to your mortgage lender.

Anything else?
Tell your mortgage lender as soon as you get into difficulties with your mortgage. If you are unable to meet your repayments, you may be able to negotiate a temporary agreement for reduced repayments (e.g. during your maternity leave). If you have a 'flexible mortgage', this should be relatively easy to arrange. Some mortgage lenders allow a few months' 'repayment holiday' once during the life of the mortgage.

If you have Mortgage Protection insurance, contact your insurer immediately. Most insurance policies will pay out if you are receiving income-based JSA or Income Support, but not if you are only receiving Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, so check carefully.

Council Tax Benefit

(Not applicable in Northern Ireland.)

What is it?
A benefit to help you pay your Council Tax if your income is low.

Who gets it?
If your income is low or you're getting income-based JSA or Income Support, you may get Council Tax Benefit.

How much is it?
You may get all of your Council Tax paid or just part of it. It will depend on your income, savings, whether other adults live with you, and an assessment of your circumstances.

How do I claim?
If you're getting income-based JSA or Income Support, you will get a Council Tax Benefit claim form with your JSA/Income Support claim form. Otherwise, get a form from your local council.

Free milk and vitamins

Who gets them?
You can get these free if you are pregnant and in a family receiving Income Support, income-based JSA or Pension Credit guarantee credit.

If you have a child under 5, receive Child Tax Credit *only* and have a family income of £13,230 or less (2003/4) you qualify.

How do I claim?
Your local Jobcentre Plus/Social Security office will arrange for these to be issued to you once you tell them that you are pregnant and the date your baby is due. You will get milk tokens which can be exchanged for one pint of milk a day from most shops and milkmen. From October 2004, responsibility for issuing the tokens is transferring to the Department of Health; your midwife will be able to advise you of the new arrangements.

Once your baby is born you should claim Child Tax Credit from the Inland Revenue. They will review your financial situation, and if you fulfil the qualifying criteria, which is to receive Child Tax Credit *only* with a family income of £13,230 or less (2003/4), they will pass your details to the Token Distribution Unit (TDU) so that tokens can be issued to you. Apart from claiming Child Tax Credit for your baby there is nothing more you need to do. If you qualify, the TDU will send you tokens that you can use for liquid milk if you are breastfeeding or infant formula if you are bottle-feeding every four weeks. When your baby is a year old the tokens will change to liquid milk only.

Infant formula milk and vitamins are available form Child Health Centres/Clinics and, in some areas, pharmacies. Your midwife/health visitor should know what the local arrangements are

When obtaining supplies from the Child Health Centres/Clinics you will need to show your benefit book or award letter and proof of your child/children's age(s) (your Child Benefit order book, the birth certificate or your parent-held child health record).

Reduced-price formula milk

You may buy infant formula milk at a reduced price if you have a baby aged under one year and receive Working Tax Credit with a family income of £14,200 or less (2003/4). The Inland Revenue will automatically assess you for this and will arrange for you to be issued with an NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate if you qualify.

Help with hospital fares

Who gets it?
If your family gets income-based JSA, or Income Support, you can get a refund for fares to and from the hospital (including visits for antenatal care). This can cover normal public transport fares, estimated petrol costs and taxi fares if there is no alternative. You may also be entitled to help if your family has a low income. You may also get help if you are in receipt of tax credit or pension credit. Check your award letter for details.

How do I claim?
If you are claiming one of the benefits mentioned above, you can claim at the hospital at the time of your visit by showing proof that you get the benefit. Alternatively you can claim within three months of your visit by filling in form HC5, which you can get from the hospital or the Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Agency.

If you are not in receipt of one of the above benefits and your income is low, you must first fill in form HC1, which you can get from your doctor, hospital or Social Security Office. Depending on how low your income is, you will then be given either certificate HC2, which means you qualify for free services, or certificate HC3, which means that you qualify for some help. You show the certificate when you go to the hospital, or you can claim within three months of your visit on form HC5.

Maternity Benefits

Maternity Allowance (MA)

- for women who have changed jobs during pregnancy and/or
- for women who have had periods of low earnings or unemployment during pregnancy;
- for women who are self-employed.

What is it?
A weekly allowance for women who work just before or during their pregnancy but who can't get Statutory Maternity Pay (see below). You may get MA if you are self-employed, if you stopped work or if you changed jobs during pregnancy.

Who gets it?
You can claim MA if you have worked in at least 26 of the 66 weeks before your expected week of childbirth. You must have earned at least £30 per week for 13 weeks. You should choose the 13 weeks in which you earned the most. In your chosen weeks, you can add together earnings from more than one job, including any self-employed work.

How much is it?
MA is paid for 26 weeks at a flat rate of £100 per week or 90% of your average earnings if this is less.

When is it paid?
MA *is paid for up to 26 weeks,* but only for weeks in which you are not working. The earliest you can claim MA is 15 weeks before your baby is due and the earliest it can start is 11 weeks before your baby is due. The latest it can start is your expected week of childbirth. If you are employed or self-employed, you can choose when to start your MA, but if you are unemployed, your MA must start 11 weeks before your baby is due.

How do I claim?
The rules are complicated, so if you are not sure whether you qualify, make a claim. Your local Jobcentre Plus (in Northern Ireland, the Incapacity Benefits Branch, Castle Court, Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1SB) will work out whether or not you can get the benefit.

You must claim within three months of giving birth or you may lose the benefit. Fill in form MA1 (available from your social security office or antenatal clinic) and send it to Jobcentre Plus (in Northern Ireland, the Incapacity Benefits Branch). You must also send your maternity certificate (form MAT B1), which you get from your GP or midwife; and, if you are employed, form SMP1 from your employer to show why you don't qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay. Send in form MA1 as soon as you are 26 weeks pregnant; you can always send the other forms later.

If you have not earned enough, have not worked for enough weeks or have not paid enough National Insurance contributions by the time you are 26 weeks pregnant, then you can decide to apply for MA later in your pregnancy. You should send off the MA1 form as soon as you have fulfilled all the qualifying conditions.

Maternity Allowance is paid by a book of orders which you cash, or directly into your bank account. If you are not entitled to MA, the Jobcentre Plus/Incapacity Benefits Branch will use the same claim form to check whether you might be entitled to Incapacity Benefit (see below). Sometimes they forget, so if you do not hear from them about this, contact them.

Incapacity Benefit (IB)

- for women who have paid some National Insurance contributions during the last three years.

What is it?
A weekly allowance which can be paid to women who don't qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance.

Who gets it?
You get Incapacity Benefit (IB) if you have enough National Insurance contributions in earlier tax years. Claim if you have paid any National Insurance contributions during the last three tax years that do not overlap the current calendar year. If you are not sure whether or not you qualify, claim and your local Jobcentre Plus/Incapacity Benefits Branch will work out whether you can get the benefit.

How much is it and when is it paid?
It is £54.40 per week. It is paid from six weeks before your baby is due until two weeks after your baby is actually born. You won't get IB for any week in which you work.

How do I claim?
Use the Maternity Allowance claim form MA1, which you can get from your social security office (Jobcentre Plus/Social Security Agency) or your antenatal clinic. You also have to send your maternity certificate (form MAT B1), which you get from your midwife or GP when you are about 20 weeks pregnant. You don't need to send in a sick note from your doctor.

If you are not entitled to Maternity Allowance, the social security office (in Northern Ireland the Incapacity Benefits Branch) will check automatically to see if you qualify for IB. Sometimes they forget, so if you do not hear from them about this, contact them. It can be paid directly into your bank or by a book of orders that you cash. You must claim within three months of giving birth or you may lose the benefit.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

- for women who have been in the same job throughout their pregnancy *and*
- whose earnings average £77 per week or more.

What is it?
Maternity pay for 26 weeks. Your employer pays it to you and claims most or all of it back from the Inland Revenue. **You can get it even if you don't plan to go back to work. You will not have to pay SMP back if you don't return to work.** You may qualify for SMP from more than one employer.

Who gets it?
You get SMP if:

- you have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the end of your qualifying week (the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth, which is approximately the 26th week of pregnancy), i.e. you started the job before you got pregnant;
- you are still in your job in this qualifying week (it doesn't matter if you are off work sick, or on holiday);
- you actually receive at least £77 (before tax) per week in earnings, on average, in the eight weeks (if you are paid weekly) or two months (if you are paid monthly) up to the last pay day before the end of the qualifying week.

To find out which is your qualifying week, look on a calendar for the Sunday before your baby is due (or the due date if that is a Sunday) and count back 15 Sundays from there. You should use the due date on the MAT B1 certificate which your midwife or GP will give you when you are about 20 weeks pregnant.

If you are not sure if you're entitled to SMP, ask anyway. Your employer will work out whether or not you should get it, and if you don't qualify they will give you form SMP1 to explain why. If your employer is not sure how to work out your SMP or how to claim it back, they can ring 08457 143 143 for advice.

How much is it?
For the first six weeks you get 90% of your average pay. After that you get the basic rate of SMP, which is £100 per week (or 90% of your average earnings, if that is less) for 20 weeks.

The average is calculated from the pay you actually received in the eight weeks or two months up to the last pay day before the end of the qualifying week. Your employer normally pays your SMP in the same way as your salary is paid. S/he deducts any tax and National Insurance contributions.

When is it paid?
The earliest you can start your SMP is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. This is when you are about 29 weeks pregnant, but you have to use the due date on your MAT B1 certificate, which your midwife or GP will give you. Find the Sunday before your baby is due (or the due date if it is a Sunday) and count back 11 Sundays from there. It is for you to decide when you want to stop work. You can even work right up until the date the baby is due, unless:

- you have a pregnancy-related illness/absence in the last four weeks of your pregnancy. In this case your employer can start your maternity leave even if you are absent for only one day. However, if you are ill only for a short time your employer may agree to let you start your maternity leave when you had planned; or
- your baby is born before the day you were planning to start your leave. In this case SMP will start on the day after the birth and maternity leave will start on the day of the birth.

SMP is paid for 26 weeks and usually starts on the Sunday after you go on maternity leave. So if your last day of work is a Friday or Saturday, it will start immediately. You cannot get any SMP for any week in which you work even part of a week. So if you return to work early, your SMP will stop.

How do I claim?
To get SMP you must give your employer 28 days notice of the date you want to start your pay and you cannot then change your mind. If it is not reasonably practicable for you to give 28 days notice, you should give it as soon as you can (e.g. you may have to go into hospital unexpectedly). The notice should be in writing if your employer asks for this.

If you are unemployed

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

What is it?
An allowance which lasts for up to 26 weeks for people who are unemployed or working less than 16 hours a week.

Who gets it?
You get it if you have paid enough National Insurance contributions during the last two tax years that do not overlap the current calendar year. You have to be available for work for as many hours as your caring responsibilities permit (not less than 16 hours), and you have to be actively seeking work.

How much is it?
If you are under 18, you get £32.90 a week; if you are aged 18–24, you get £43.25 a week; if you are 25 or over, you get £54.65 a week. Your partner's earnings are not taken into account, but, if you are in part time work, your earnings are.

How do I claim?
Go to your local Jobcentre Plus in person (Social Security Office in Northern Ireland), or you can claim by post if you live too far away. You will have to go to the Jobcentre Plus (Social Security Office in Northern Ireland) every fortnight to 'sign on' to show that you are available for work. The benefit is paid directly into your bank account, or by Giro normally every two weeks.

Anything else?
If your family has no other income, you will probably be entitled to income-based JSA and other benefits for families on low incomes (see section above).

If I resign from my job and don't go back to work after maternity leave, can I claim anything?
You may be able to claim contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for up to six months. However, you will have to show that you had 'just cause' for voluntarily leaving your job. You will also have to be available for work for as many hours a week as your caring responsibilities permit (and not less than 16).

If you haven't paid enough National Insurance contributions, you may be able to claim income-based JSA instead (see above), depending on your personal circumstances. Apply in person at the Jobcentre (Social Security Office in Northern Ireland).If you are a single parent, you may be able to claim Income Support (see above) once the baby is born.

If you are a couple and your partner has a low income, you may be able to claim Tax Credit. Apply to Jobcentre Plus for Income Support or to the Inland Revenue for Tax Credits.

Maternity leave

Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)

- 26 weeks' leave for all employed women;
- right to return to same job.

What is it?
OML is 26 weeks' leave from work with the right to return to the same job at the end of it. **You must give your employer the correct notice (see How to give notice below).**

Who gets it?
All women employees are entitled to OML from day one of their employment. It doesn't matter how many hours you work or how long you have worked for your employer, you will still be entitled to OML.

You are usually an employee if the following arrangements exist at your work:

- your employer deducts tax and National Insurance from your pay;
- your employer controls the work you do, when and how you do it;
- your employer provides all the equipment for your work.

If you work for an agency or do casual work, you are probably not an employee, but you can still get maternity pay if you meet the normal conditions (see Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance).

When can I start my maternity leave?
The earliest you can start your OML is 11 weeks before your expected week of childbirth. This is when you are about 29 weeks pregnant, so count back from the due date on your MAT B1 certificate, which your midwife or GP will give you. Find the Sunday before your baby is due (or the due date if it is a Sunday) and count back 11 Sundays from there. **It is for you to decide when you want to stop work.** You can even work right up until the date the baby is born, unless:

- you have a **pregnancy-related illness/absence in the last four weeks of your pregnancy**. In this case your employer can start your maternity leave even if you are off sick for only one day. However, if you are ill only for a short time your employer may agree to let you start

your maternity leave when you had planned, for example, if they have arranged maternity cover;
- your baby is born before the day you were planning to start your leave. In this case leave will start on the day of birth and you should tell your employer as soon as you can that you have given birth.

Additional Maternity Leave (AML)

- 26 weeks unpaid leave from the end of OML;
- for employees who have been in the same job for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before their baby is due;
- right to return to the same job, or if that is not reasonably practicable, a suitable job on very similar terms and conditions.

What is it?
AML is a further 26 weeks leave from work, usually unpaid, after OML. It starts on the day after the end of OML.

Who gets it?
You can take AML if you have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth. This is when you are about 26 weeks pregnant. In practice, this means you must have started your job before you got pregnant in order to qualify for AML.

How do I work out the 15th week before my baby is due?
Find the Sunday before your baby is due (or the due date if it is a Sunday) and count back 15 Sundays from there. That is the start of the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth.

You should use the due date on the MAT B1 certificate that your midwife or GP will give you when you are about 20 weeks pregnant.

Do I have to tell my employer how much maternity leave I am going to take?
No, if you are entitled to AML, your employer should assume that you will be taking it. If you decide not to take some or all of your AML, you should simply give 28 days notice to return to work early.

How to give notice

When do I have to tell my employer I'm pregnant?
The latest time you can tell your employer that you are pregnant is the 15th week before your baby is due. There is nothing to say that you have to tell your employer any earlier, although it may be to your advantage, for example, you have special health and safety protection during pregnancy and the right to paid time off for antenatal care once your employer knows you are pregnant. The law protects you from being dismissed or discriminated against because of pregnancy.

Giving notice for OML and AML

To give notice that you will be taking maternity leave, you must tell your employer the following things in or before the 15th week before your baby is due (if your employer asks you to, you must put the notice in writing:

- *that you are pregnant;*
- *the expected week of childbirth;*
- *the date on which you intend to start your ordinary maternity leave.*

If you want to change the date you start your maternity leave, you must give your employer notice of the new date at least 28 days before the new date or the old date, whichever is earliest. If there is a good reason why that is not possible, tell your employer as soon as you reasonably can.

Note: you can choose when to start getting your SMP; the earliest you can start getting SMP is in the 11th week before the week your baby is due.

Once you have given notice, your employer must write to you within 28 days and state the date you are expected to return from maternity leave.

If you cannot give notice by the 15th week before you are due (for example, because you have to go into hospital unexpectedly), you must give notice as soon as you reasonably can.

Rights during Maternity Leave

What will I get while I'm away?
During the first 26 weeks of leave (your OML period) your contractual rights, apart from your normal pay, continue as if you were still at work.

Your contractual rights are your terms and conditions, for example, a company car or paid holidays.

During OML you may be entitled to SMP or MA (see Maternity Benefits). After that your leave will usually be unpaid. Some employers offer extra (or contractual) maternity pay, so check your contract or ask the human resources department or your union representative.

You will continue to be an employee throughout your AML, but the only contractual rights that will continue automatically will be:

- the notice period in your contract of employment (if either you or your employer wish to terminate your employment);
- any entitlement to redundancy pay (after two years' service);
- disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- if your contract has a section which states that you must not work for any another employer, this will still apply during maternity leave;
- it might be possible to negotiate with your employer for other contractual rights to continue.

During the whole of your maternity leave you are still entitled to your statutory rights (i.e. rights that apply by law to all employees in this country). For example, everyone has a legal right to 20 days paid annual leave whether they are on maternity leave or not. Also your employer must not discriminate against you by failing to consider you for such opportunities as promotion.

If you are made redundant whilst on maternity leave, your employer must offer you any suitable alternative work that is available. If there is none, they must pay you any notice and redundancy pay that you are entitled to.

Returning to work

Do I have to give notice of my return?
No, unless you want to return to work before the end of your maternity leave. You simply go to work on the day that you are due back.

- If you are entitled to take OML, you will be due back to work on the day after the end of the 26 week period.
- If you are entitled to AML, you will be due back to work on the day after the 52-week period.

If you want to return to work before the end of your maternity leave, you must give your employer at least 28 days notice of the date you will be returning. If you do not give this notice and just turn up at work before the end of your maternity leave, your employer can send you away for up to 28 days or until the end of your leave, whichever is earlier.

Note: if you are entitled to AML but only wish to take OML, you must give 28 days notice of your return as you are in fact returning early.

The law does not allow you to work for two weeks after childbirth, and this period is known as **Compulsory Maternity Leave.** You will not be allowed to return to work during this time.

What happens when I go back?
When you go back to work after OML, you have the right to return to exactly the same job.

Unless you are entitled to additional maternity leave (see below), you can't stay on maternity leave after the end of your OML, unless this has been agreed with your employer. You should ask your employer to confirm this agreement in writing.

When you go back to work after AML, you have the right to return to exactly the same job. But if your employer can show that this is not reasonably practicable, for example, because the job no longer exists, you have the right to be offered a suitable alternative job on very similar terms and conditions.

What if I work for a small firm?
If you work for a firm that employs five people or less, you still have the right to AML. However, if your employer can show that it is not possible to keep your job open or to offer you a very similar job, then you cannot automatically claim that you have been unfairly dismissed if your job is not there at the end of the AML. However, you may still be able to claim ordinary unfair dismissal and sex discrimination, and you may be entitled to redundancy pay.

What happens if I need more time off work?
You cannot stay off work after your maternity leave has ended, as you will lose your right to return to your job if you do not go back at the end of your OML or AML (if you are entitled to it). If you need more time off you could:

- Ask your employer if you can take annual leave immediately after your maternity leave. Note that paid holiday continues to accrue during maternity leave so you may have some holiday owing to you.
- Ask your employer if they will agree to a further period off work. You should ask your employer to confirm this agreement in writing and to confirm that you will have the right to return to the same job.
- Take some parental leave at the end of your maternity leave (see below). Note that you must give 21 days notice to take parental leave, and it is usually unpaid unless your employer offers paid parental leave.
- If you cannot return because you are ill, you can take sick leave as long as you follow your employer's sickness procedures.

What should I do if I don't want to go back to work?
You should resign in the normal way, giving the notice required by your contract or the notice period that is normally given in your workplace. If you do not have a contract or nothing has been said, you should give a week's notice.

Note: You do *not* have to repay any of the SMP you received (6 weeks at 90% and 20 weeks at £100).

What happens if I say I want to return to work and I change my mind?
Many women find it impossible to know before the birth how they will feel afterwards, so it is always a good idea to say you are coming back in order to keep your options open. If you decide later not to return, you can resign from your job in the normal way. Your notice period can run at the same time as your maternity leave.

Can I change my working hours?
You have the right to ask for flexible hours and your employer has a duty seriously to consider your request. Your employer must have a good business reason for refusing. (See Return to work on child-friendly working hours below.)

My maternity leave ends soon and I'm pregnant again. What rights will I have?
Maternity leave does not break your continuity of employment, so your right to maternity leave for this baby will be based on your total service with your employer. You may also qualify for SMP as long as you meet the normal conditions. However, this will mean you will have to be receiving over £77 per week from your employer in approximately weeks 18–26 of your pregnancy when SMP entitlement is calculated.

If you have already taken OML and AML (a year off) you will be entitled to a second period of OML and AML. However, if you go straight onto another period of OML without physically returning to work and decide to return to work after the second period of OML, you will not have the right to return to exactly the same job as you normally would at the end of OML. However, you will have the same rights as you would have had at the end of AML, which is the right to return to the same job or, if that is not reasonably practicable, a suitable alternative job on similar terms and conditions.

If you return to work after the end of your first period of AML and before the start of your second period of OML – even if you only return for one day – your rights are not affected and you would have the right to return to exactly the same job after OML (see Return to work section).

Other employment rights

These rights apply no matter how long you have been employed or how many hours you work per week.

Paid time off for antenatal care

If you are an employee, you have the right to take reasonable time off for your antenatal appointments, including time needed to travel to your clinic or GP, without loss of pay.

You should let your employer know when you need time off. For appointments after the first one, your employer can ask to see your appointment card and a certificate stating that you are pregnant.

Antenatal care can include parentcraft and relaxation classes. You may need a letter from your GP or midwife to show your employer, saying that these classes are part of your antenatal care.

Health and safety rights

If you are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding, your employer must make sure that the kind of work you do and your working conditions will not put your health or your baby's health at risk. To get the full benefit of this legal

protection you must notify your employer in writing that you are pregnant or have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. Your employer must:

- Carry out a risk assessment at your workplace and do all that is reasonable to remove or reduce the risks found.
- If there are still risks, your employer must alter your working conditions or hours of work to remove the risk.
- If this is not possible or would not avoid the risk, your employer must offer you a suitable alternative job.
- If this is not possible, your employer must suspend you on full pay for as long as is necessary to avoid the risks. If you do night work and your doctor advises that you should stop for health and safety reasons, you have the right to transfer to day work or, if that is not possible, to be suspended on full pay. You must provide a medical certificate.

Dismissal or unfair treatment

It is against the law for your employer to treat you unfairly, dismiss you or select you for redundancy for any reason connected with pregnancy, childbirth or maternity leave.

If you are dismissed while you are pregnant or during your maternity leave, your employer must give you a written statement of the reasons. You may also have a claim for compensation for sex discrimination. If you are making a claim against your employer, you must put your claim into the Employment Tribunal within three months.

Other types of leave

Paternity Leave

What is it?
Since 6 April 2003 there has been a new statutory right to paid paternity leave. Following the birth of a child, eligible employees will be able to take one or two weeks leave to care for the child or support the mother. They must give their employer the correct notice. The leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth.

Who gets it?
Your baby's biological father, your husband or your partner, including a same sex partner, will be able to take paternity leave providing they:

- expect to have responsibility for bringing up the child;
- have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before your baby is due.

When can my partner start paternity leave?
Your husband or partner can choose to start paternity leave either:

- from the date of your baby's birth, or
- from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected), or
- from a chosen date.

Paternity leave must have been taken within 56 days of your baby's birth or, if your baby was born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 days after the expected week of birth.

Your partner will be able to return to the same job after paternity leave.

What is Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)?
SPP is paid by employers for up to 2 weeks at a rate of £100 per week or 90% of average earnings, whichever is less.

Can my partner get SPP?
Your partner can get SPP if he or she:

- is the baby's father or your husband/partner and is responsible for the baby's upbringing;
- has worked for an employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due or, if the baby is born before then, would have worked for an employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before the baby is due;
- is still employed by the same employer before the birth;
- earns at least £77 per week on average (before tax) in the eight weeks immediately before the week your baby is born.

Your partner must give their employer notice of the date they want their SPP to start at least 28 days before or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Parental leave

What is it?
Parental leave is designed to give parents more time with their young children. It entitles you to take 13 weeks leave per parent per child, usually unpaid, up to your child's fifth birthday. Parents of disabled children will be entitled to 18 weeks leave. In the case of a child on Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the leave must be taken before the child is 18. It is also available for adoptive parents, in which

case you can take it either within five years of the placement for adoption or the child's 18th birthday, whichever is earlier.

Who gets it?

- Parents of children born or adopted on or after 15 December 1999.
- Parents of children who were born or adopted between 15/12/94 and 14/12/99, in which case leave must be taken by 31/3/05.
- To qualify for parental leave you must be an employee, have been employed for a year (by the time you wish to take it) and be taking the leave in order to care for your child. You must give your employer 21 days notice of the dates you want to take your leave. Your employer can postpone the leave, but only if their business would be unduly disrupted.
- Fathers wanting to take time off at or around the birth of a baby can take parental leave, providing they give their employers 21 days notice of the expected week of childbirth. An employer cannot postpone leave in these circumstances.

Time off for dependants

Every worker is also entitled to emergency unpaid leave to make arrangements for the care for a dependant who falls ill, gives birth or is injured. This leave can be used if there is a sudden problem with care arrangements for the dependant (e.g. if your childminder falls ill).

Return to work on Child-Friendly Working hours

If you need to change your working hours because of childcare, you have the right to have your request seriously considered under sex discrimination law *and*, since April 2003, parents of young children have the right to ask for flexible working arrangements.

It is not yet clear how the two rights will work together. You should therefore carefully follow the procedure for asking for flexible hours under the new right, and if your request is refused, you should get advice about whether you have a claim for compensation under the new right and under sex discrimination law.

The right to ask for flexible working arrangements

What is it?

Since April 2003 parents have the right to ask their employers for a change in their working patterns so that they can care for their children. The change requested could relate to the hours that you work, the days that you work or your place of work. There is a clear procedure that you and your employer must follow. Your employer must seriously consider your request and can only refuse for one of the business reasons set out in the legislation.

Who does it apply to?

You can ask for flexible work if:

- you are an employee;
- you are the parent, adoptive parent, guardian or foster carer of a child under six or a disabled child under 18 (or you are married to, living with or the partner of that person);
- you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks by the time you make your request;
- you have not made a request in the last 12 months.

How do I ask to change my hours?

You will need to send a written request (your 'application') to your employer giving details of the new working pattern you want to work. There is a clear procedure that both you and your employer must follow.

Your application must include all of the following:

- State that this is an application for flexible work and that you are applying as a parent or as someone with parental responsibility.
- State the working pattern you are asking for and the date you want it to start.
- Explain how you think the new working pattern may affect the employer and how you think it could be dealt with.
- State whether you have asked before and, if so, when.
- Sign and date the application.

Your application can be by letter, fax or email and you should keep a copy. Some employers may have a standard form for making an application, so you should check.

What happens when my employer receives the application?
Your employer must follow the procedure stated in the Regulations. They must:

- Hold a meeting with you within 28 days of your application.
- The meeting should discuss your application and, if your employer does not think that would work, any possible alternative compromise arrangements.
- Give you notice of their decision within 14 days of the meeting and tell you about your right of appeal.
- Give reasons for refusing, which must be one of those allowed by the regulations, with an explanation as to why that reason applies in your case.

Can my employer refuse my request?
Your employer can only refuse your request for one of the following business reasons:

- the burden of additional costs;
- the detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand;
- an inability to reorganise the work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- the detrimental effect on quality;
- detrimental effect on performance;
- there is not enough work during the periods the employee wants to work;
- planned structural changes.

Your employer must also explain why that reason applies in your circumstances.

What can I do if my employer refuses?
You have the right to appeal within 14 days of receiving notification of your employer's refusal. To appeal, you must write to your employer stating your reasons for appealing. You must sign and date your letter.

Your employer must hold the appeal meeting within 14 days of receiving your notice of appeal. They must notify you of their decision in writing within 14 days of the appeal meeting, giving reasons for their decision.

What can I do if I don't think my employer had a good reason to refuse my request?
Under the new right to ask for flexible work you can make a claim in a tribunal if your employer does not follow the procedure or refuses for a reason not stated in the rules or without an explanation.

You must complete the appeal procedure and wait for the decision before you can make a tribunal application. The tribunal will not question whether your employer was justified in refusing unless you can show that your employer got the facts wrong. The tribunal can only award a maximum of eight weeks pay (up to the statutory maximum of £260 per week) in compensation.

Your rights under sex discrimination law

What are my rights under sex discrimination law?
Although there isn't an absolute legal right to change your working pattern, if you need to change the way you work because of your childcare responsibilities, your employer must seriously consider your request and look at how you can do your old job in a way that meets your childcare needs.

Your employer can only refuse if they have a good business reason. It may be indirect sex discrimination if an employer refuses a woman's request to change her working pattern, and it may be direct sex discrimination if an employer refuses a man's request when they allow a woman to work differently.

Your employer will only know if they have a good reason for refusing your request by giving it a lot of thought. For example, refusing even to consider your request or having a policy of refusing part-time work would probably be seen as sex discrimination by an employment tribunal. An employer must consider each individual request in order to avoid discriminating against a woman or man with childcare responsibilities.

People often assume that a job has to be done full-time or at certain fixed times of day, but if you and your employer look carefully at your job, you may be able to work out a more child-friendly option – perhaps one that neither of you had considered before.

Does this apply to me?
Yes, sex discrimination law applies to all employers and all employed parents with childcare responsibilities, but it only applies if you would be disadvantaged by not being allowed to work the child-friendly hours you need to. In other words, you must have a good reason for asking to work differently – just as an employer must have a good reason for refusing. A good reason might be:

- You can't find or afford full-time childcare.
- You can't find or afford childcare outside 9–5 Monday–Friday.
- You have to be there when your child or children come home from school.
- Your parent or relative cannot look after your child full time.
- You are suffering severe stress from working long hours.
- You are distressed or disadvantaged by having to work your old hours.

When should I use my rights under sex discrimination law instead of under the right to request flexible work?
The new statutory right to request flexible working only applies to employees who are parents of children under 6 (or under 18 if disabled), who haven't made an application within the last 12 months, and who have worked for their employer for 26 weeks at the time of making the application.

Sex discrimination law may help you if you need to change your working pattern in order to care for your child but cannot use the statutory procedure, for example, because you have made a request under the procedure within the last 12 months or have worked for your employer for less than 26 weeks.

Do I have to follow a procedure under sex discrimination law?
No, there is no specific application procedure under sex discrimination law, so we suggest that, if you can, you initially make your request under the new right to ask for flexible work (see above).

Under sex discrimination law, once you have asked your employer to work flexibly, your employer must seriously consider your request. Your employer must look at how you can do your old job in a way that meets your childcare needs and can only refuse if they have a good business reason for refusing. Your employer will only know if they have a good reason for refusing your request by giving it a lot of thought. For example, refusing even to consider your request or having a policy of refusing part-time work would probably be seen as sex discrimination by an employment tribunal.

How do I know if my employer had a good reason to refuse my request?
It will largely depend on the circumstances of your work. If your new working pattern will cause major problems, then your employer may well be justified in refusing. In the end it would be up to an employment tribunal to decide whether your employer did have a good reason to refuse if you bring a claim for indirect sex discrimination. There have been many tribunal cases under sex discrimination law in the last few years, and many of the reasons given by employers are not seen as justifiable.

What can I do if I don't think my employer had a good reason to refuse my request?
You can get further advice on your employer's reasons for refusing from your trade union representative or local Citizens Advice Bureau. If you want advice on whether you might have a good case, you should see a specialist employment lawyer.

Under sex discrimination law, you can make a claim in an employment tribunal if your employer refuses without a good business reason. The tribunal will scrutinise your employer's reasons and question your employer carefully about whether they were justified in refusing. They can also award unlimited compensation for loss of pay (if you had to leave your job) and for injury to feelings.

You must make a tribunal claim within three months of the refusal under the new right and under sex discrimination law.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Some of these organisations are large. Many are small. Some offer advice or information face to face or over the telephone. Others concentrate on providing useful leaflets or books (these are marked *). Many have local branches or can put you in touch with local groups or a local contact.

When you write for information it's important to remember to enclose a large stamped addressed envelope for a reply.

SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)
Brandon House
180 Borough High Street
London SE1 1LW
020 7396 5100
www.acas.org.uk
Advice on time off for antenatal care and on maternity rights, parental leave and matters like unfair dismissal. For your nearest office, look in the phone book or ask at your local library or citizens advice bureau.*

Action on Pre-eclampsia (APEC)
84-88 Pinner Road
Harrow
Middx HA1 4HZ
020 8863 3271 (admin)
020 8427 4217 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-1pm)
www.apec.org.uk
National charity offering support and information about pre-eclampsia via its helpline and newsletters. Provides a befriender service.*

Active Birth Centre
25 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
020 7281 6760
www.activebirthcentre.com
Promotes a holistic approach to active childbirth and parenting. Antenatal and postnatal classes (fee payable). Publishes list of UK active birth teachers.*

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers
PO Box 207
Bridgewater
Somerset TA6 7YT
0870 401 7711 (24-hour voluntary helpline)
www.home.clara.net/abm/
Telephone advice service for breastfeeding mothers. Local support groups.*

Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)
5 Ann's Court
Grove Road
Surbiton
Surrey KT6 4BE
0870 765 1433 (helpline)
www.aims.org.uk
Voluntary pressure group which aims for improvements in maternity services. Support and advice about parents' rights, complaints procedures and choices within maternity care, including home birth.*

Benefits Agency: local offices
For general advice on all social security benefits, pensions and National Insurance, including maternity benefits and Income Support and Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, telephone, write or call in to your local social security office. The address will be in the phone book under 'Benefits Agency'. Hours are usually 9.30am to 3.30pm. In busy offices there may be a very long wait if you call in.

Breastfeeding Network
0870 900 8787
(breastfeeding supporter line, 9.30am-9.30pm every day)

Caesarean Support Network
55 Cooil Drive
Douglas
Isle of Man IM2 2HF
01624 661 269 (Mon-Fri after 6pm and weekends)
Offers emotional support and practical advice to mothers who have had or may need a Caesarean delivery. Can put you in touch with a local mother who has undergone a Caesarean and understands the problems.*

Child
Charter House
43 St Leonards Road
Bexhill-on-Sea
E. Sussex TN40 1JA
01424 732361
www.child.org.uk
Self-help organisation offering information and support to people coping with problems of infertility and childlessness. May be able to put you in touch with a local contact group.*

Child Poverty Action Group
94 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
020 7837 7979
www.cpag.org.uk
Campaigns on behalf of low-income families. Information and advice for parents on benefits, housing, welfare rights etc.*

Child Safe Wales
Llandough Hospital
Penlan Road
Penarth CF64 2XX
029 2071 6933
www.capic.org.uk
Provides information on child safety.

Citizens Advice Bureaux National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
Myddleton House
115-123 Pentonville Road
London N1 9LZ
020 7833 2181 (call for telephone number of your local office)
www.nacab.org.uk

Community Health Councils
The Association of Welsh Community Health Councils (AWCHC)
Park House
Greyfriars Road
Cardiff CF10 3AF
029 2023 5558 (24-hour answering service)

In Northern Ireland CHCs are called Health and Social Services Councils. For your local CHC/HSSC, look in your phone book under the name of your district health authority or local Health and Social Services Council.

Commission for Racial Equality
St Dunstan's House
201-211 Borough High Street
London SE1 1GZ
020 7939 0000
www.cre.gov.uk

In Wales:
CRE Wales
3rd Floor
Capital Tower
Greyfriars Road
Cardiff CF1 3AG
029 2072 9200
Encourages good relations between people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, the elimination of racial discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities.

Community Relations Council
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN
028 9022 7500
www.community-relations.org.uk
Provides advice and support for those working in Northern Ireland to develop a society free from sectarianism.

Diabetes UK
10 Parkway
London NW1 7AA
020 7424 1000 (admin)
020 7424 1030 (careline)
020 7424 1888 (text phone)
www.diabetes.org.uk

In Wales:
Diabetes UK Cymru
Quebec House
Castlebridge
Cowbridge Road East
Cardiff CF11 9AB
029 2066 8276
Information and support for all people with diabetes.*

Equal Opportunities Commission
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3EQ
0845 601 5901
www.eoc.org.uk

In Wales:
Windsor House
Windsor Lane
Cardiff CF10 3GE
029 2064 1079
www.eoc.org.uk
Information and advice on issues of discrimination and equal opportunities.*

Family Welfare Association
501-505 Kingsland Road
London E8 4AU
020 7254 6251
www.fwa.org
National charity providing free social work services and support for children and families. Provides financial support for families in need throughout the UK.*

Independent Midwives Association
1 The Great Quarry
Guildford
Surrey GU1 3XN
01483 821104
www.independentmidwives.org.uk
Free advice to women thinking about a home birth. Offers maternity full care to women who book with them for home births. Fees vary. Send an A5 SAE for information.*

Institute for Complementary Medicine
PO Box 194
London SE16 7QZ
020 7237 5165
www.icmedicine.co.uk
Charity providing information on complementary medicine and referrals to qualified practitioners or helpful organisations.*

La Lèche League (Great Britain)
PO Box 29
West Bridgeford
Nottingham NG2 7NP
0845 120 2918 (24-hour helpline)
www.laleche.org.uk
Help and information for women who want to breastfeed. Personal counselling. Local groups. Write with SAE for details of your nearest counsellor/group.*

Life
Life House
Newbold Terrace
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV32 4EA
01926 421587
01926 311511 (helpline 9am-9pm)
www.lifeuk.org
Charity offering information and advice pre- and after-birth and after abortion. Accommodation for homeless and unsupported mothers.

Local advice agencies
There may be a number of helpful local advice agencies in your district offering general advice on a range of topics, like benefits, debts and consumer problems, or specialising in one area such as law or housing. To find out what exists ask at your library or town hall.

Local health boards
If you're new to an area they can give you a list of local doctors including those with a special interest in pregnancy and childbirth. If you have difficulty in finding a GP to take you on contact the LHB. Look in the phone book under the name of your local health board.

Maternity Alliance
3rd Floor West
2-6 Northburgh Street
London EC1V 0AY
020 490 7639 (admin)
020 490 7638 (advice line)
www.maternityalliance.org.uk
Information on all aspects of maternity care and rights. Advice on benefits, maternity rights at work.*

Minority Ethnic Community Health and Social Wellbeing Project (NI)
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC)
12 Upper Crescent
Belfast BT7 1NT
028 9024 4639
www.mcrc.co.uk
As part of MCRC, promotes two-way communication between minority ethnic groups and health service providers. Provides translation and interpreting services, multilingual materials and a reference library.

The Multiple Births Foundation
Hamersmith House, Level 4
Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea Hospital
Du Cane Road
London W12 0HS
020 8383 3519
www.multiplebirths.org.uk
For professional support of families with twins and multiple births.*

National Childbirth Trust (NCT)
Alexandra House
Oldham Terrace
London W3 6NH
0870 770 3236 (admin)
0870 444 8707 (enquiry line)
0870 444 8708 (breast feeding)
www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com
Information and support for mothers, including breastfeeding information, antenatal classes, postnatal groups. Write for details of your nearest branch and information pack.*

NHS Direct Wales 0845 4647
24 hour nurse-led helpline providing health information and advice.
www.nhsdirect.nhs.wales.uk

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH
020 7825 2500 (admin)
0808 800 5000 (24-hour national helpline)
www.nspcc.org.uk

In Wales:
NSPCC Cymru
Capitol Tower
Greyfriars Road
Cardiff CF10 3AG
0808 100 2524 (helpline)
029 2026 7000
Aims to prevent all forms of child abuse. Look in the phone book for the number of your nearest NSPCC office if you need help.*

Patients' Association
PO Box 935
Harrow
Middx HA1 3YJ
020 8423 9111
0845 608 4455 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)
www.patients-association.com
Advice service for patients who have problems relating to health and health care.*

Public libraries
Useful starting points for finding out addresses of national and local organisations.

Race Equality First
Friary Centre, The Friary
Cardiff CF10 3FA
029 2022 4097
email: race.equality@enablis.co.uk
Now called Race Equality Councils. They are concerned with race and community relations in their area and often know of local minority ethnic organisations and support groups.

RELATE (National Marriage Guidance)
(North Wales)
8 Rivieres Avenue
Colwyn Bay
LL29 7DP
01492 533919920
www.relate.org.uk

(Mid and West Wales)
Tŷ Merthyr
Little Water Street
Camarthen SA31 1ER
01267 236737
Confidential counselling on relationship problems of any kind. To find your local branch look under RELATE or Marriage Guidance in the phone book or contact the above addresses.

The Samaritans
08457 90 90 90 (helpline)
www.shelter.org.uk
24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Confidential emotional support for anyone in crisis.

In Northern Ireland:
1850 60 90 90

Shelter
88 Old Street
London EC1V 9HU
020 7505 4699
0808 800 4444 (helpline)
www.shelter.org.uk

In Wales:
25 Walter Road
Swansea SA1 5NN
01792 469400
www.sheltercymru.org.uk
Help for those who are homeless and advice on any kind of housing problem.*

Twins and Multiple Births Association (TAMBA)
2 The Willows
Gardner Road
Guildford
Surrey GU1 4PG
0870 770 3305 (admin Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm)
(01732) 868 8000 (helpline Mon-Fri 7pm-11pm, Sat, Sun10am-11pm)
www.tamba.org.uk
Information and support for parents of multiples. Network of local Twins Clubs.*

Welsh Language Board
Market Chambers
5-7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT
029 2087 8000
0845 607 6070 (enquiry line)
www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk
Information on playgroups, Welsh education and leaflets about the benefits of bilingualism.

ADDICTIVE DRUGS

Drugaid
Drug and Alcohol Misuse Service
1a Bartlett Street
Caerphilly CF83 1JS
029 2088 1000
Counselling and information to drug, alcohol and solvent misusers and the public.

Narcotics Anonymous (UK service)
202 City Road
London ECIV 2PH
020 7251 4007
020 7730 0009 (helpline 10am-10pm)
www.ukna.org
Self-help organisations whose members help each other to stay clear of drugs. Write or phone for information and the address of your local group. Some groups have a crèche.*

National Drugs Helpline
Freephone 0800 776600 (English and Welsh)
Freephone 0800 917 6650 (for other languages, e.g. Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi & Cantonese)
www.ndh.org.uk

In Northern Ireland see Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre, Northlands and NICAS under 'Alcohol'

ALCOHOL

Alcohol Concern
Waterbridge House
32-36 Loman Street
London SE1 0EE
020 7928 7377
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
AA General Service Office
PO Box 1
Stonebow House
Stonebow
York YO1 7NJ
01904 644026
0845 769 7555 (helpline)
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Drinkline
Alcohol Helpline
0800 917 8282 (Mon-Fri 9am-11pm, Sat, Sun 6pm-11pm)

Welsh Substance Misuse Intervention Branch
National Assembly for Wales
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ
029 2082 5111
Provides a list of organisations offering help and advice.*

CHILDCARE

Daycare Trust
21 St George's Road
London SE1 6ES
020 7840 3350 (helpline 10am-5pm Mon-Fri)
www.daycaretrust.org.uk
Campaigns for the provision of good childcare facilities. The Daycare Trust gives information on all aspects of childcare.*

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin/The National Association of Welsh Medium Nursery Schools and Playgroups
145 Albany Road
Roath
Cardiff CF24 3NT
029 2043 6800
www.mym.co.uk
Help and advice on setting up and running parent and toddler groups and playgroups. Contact with local playgroups.

National Childminding Association
8 Masons Hill
Bromley BR2 9EY
020 8464 6164
www.ncma.org.uk

NIPPA–The Early Years Organisation
6c Wildflower Way
Apollo Road
Belfast BT12 6TA
028 9066 2825
www.nippa.org
Information, advice and training for early years staff and families with young children.*

Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association
Ladywell House
Newtown
Powys SY16 1JB
01686 624573
www.walesppa.co.uk
Help and advice on setting up and running parent and toddler groups and playgroups. Contact with local playgroups.

COPING ALONE

Gingerbread
7 Sovereign Close
Sovereign Court
London E1W 3HW
020 7488 9300 (admin)
0800 018 4318 (advice line Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
www.gingerbread.org.uk

In Wales:
Baltic House
4th Floor
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF10 5FH
029 2047 1900
Self-help association for one-parent families. Local groups offer support, friendship, information, advice and practical help.*

Meet-a-Mum Association (MAMA)
376 Bideford Green
Linslade
Leighton Buzzard
Beds LU7 2TY
01525 217064
020 8768 0123 (helpline Mon-Fri 7pm-10pm)
www.mama.org.uk
Support for mothers suffering from postnatal depression or who feel lonely and isolated looking after a child at home. Will try to put you in touch with another mother who has experienced similar problems, or with a group of mothers locally. Write with SAE for details of local groups.*

National Council for One Parent Families
255 Kentish Town Road
London NW5 2LX
020 7428 5400 (admin)
0800 018 5026 (lone parent helpline Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
0800 018 5126 (maintenance and money matters advice available Mon-Thu 11am-2pm, Tue 3pm-6pm)
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk
Free information for one-parent families on financial, legal and housing problems.*

Parentline
See Parentline Plus p.150
028 9024 9696 (helpline)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

NSPCC
(See p. 147)

Rape Crisis Federation

Unit 7, Provident Works
Newdeligate Street
Nottingham NG7 4FD
0115 900 3560
(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
www.rapecrisis.co.uk
Acts as a referral service for women seeking advice and/or support around issues of rape and sexual abuse.

Rape and Sexual Abuse Line
In North Wales:
PO Box 4
7-9 Abbey Road
Bangor LL57 2EA
01248 354 885 (helpline Mon-Fri 6pm-9pm, Tue 1pm-4pm, Wed 9am-12)

In South Wales:
PO Box 338
Cardiff CF24 4XH
029 2037 3181

Refuge
2/8 Maltravers Street
London WC2R 3EE
0870 599 5443 (24-hour helpline)
Emergency accommodation and advice for women and children experiencing domestic violence in London.

Welsh Women's Aid
38-48 Crwys Road
Cardiff CF24 4NN
029 2039 0874
(10am-3pm with out-of-hours message service)
Information, support and refuge for abused women and their children.*

FAMILY PLANNING

Family Planning Association
D1 Rooms
Canton House
435-451 Cowbrige Rd. East
Cardiff CF5 1JH
029 2064 4034

Sexual Health Helpline
0800 567 123

Marie Stopes Clinic
Marie Stopes House
108 Whitfield Street
London W1P 6BE
020 7388 0662
0845 300 8090 (booking & appointment line)
www.mariestopes.org.uk
Registered charity providing family planning, women's health check-ups, male and female sterilisation, pregnancy testing, advice on unplanned pregnancies and sexual counselling for men and women. You don't need to be referred by your doctor, but you do need to book an appointment. A charge is made to cover costs.

HIV AND AIDS

Sexual Health Information Line
0800 567123
0800 917 2227 (Other languages 6pm-10pm, see below)
For each of the languages listed below you can speak to an operator between 6pm and 10pm on the day shown. At all other times this is a multi-language line and you can hear messages in each language.

Bengali	*Monday*
Urdu	*Tuesday*
Arabic	*Wednesday*
Gujerati	*Thursday*
Hindi	*Friday*
Punjabi	*Saturday*
Cantonese	*Sunday*

Positively Women
347-349 City Road
London EC1V 1LR
020 7713 0444 (admin)
020 7713 1020 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)
www.positivelywomen.org.uk
Support services for women, children and families affected by HIV. Peer support, advice, information and advocacy.

ILLNESS AND DISABILITY

The Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospitals (AWCH Wales)
31 Penyrheol Drive
Sketty
Swansea SA2 9JT
01792 205 227
To promote equality health care services for children in hospital, at home and in the community. Promotes awareness of the needs of children and their families in the Health Service in Wales. To give information and support to parents and carers.*

BLISS
68 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL
0870 7700 337
www.bliss.org.uk
Parent support network for families of babies who need intensive or special care. Local branches.*

Contact a Family
209-211 City Road
London EC1V 1JN
020 7608 8700 (admin)
0808 808 3555 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)
www.cafamily.org.uk

In Wales:
Trident Court
East Moors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD
029 2044 9569
Links families of children with special needs through contact lines. All disabilities. Local parent support groups.*

Council for Disabled Children
8 Wakley Street
London EC1V 7QE
020 7843 6061
www.ncb.org.uk/cdc
Information for parents and details of organisations offering help with particular disabilities.*

Disability, Pregnancy and Parenthood International (DPPi)
Unit F9
89-93 Fonthill Road
London N4 3JH
0800 018 4730 (freephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
0800 018 9949 (text phone)
www.dppi.org.uk
Information service on parenting issues for disabled people and allied professionals.

Disability Living Centres Council
Redbank House
4 St Chad's Street
Cheetham
Manchester M8 8QA
0161 834 1044
0161 839 0885 (textphone)
www.dlcc.co.uk
Disabled Living Centres offer information and advice on products, also the opportunity to try them out and explore other solutions.*

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)
380-384 Harrow Road
London W9 2HU
020 7289 6111 (admin)
0845 130 9177 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)
0870 603 9176 (text phone Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)
www.dlf.org.uk
Sources of information on daily living and disability equipment.*

In Wales:
Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru
Wernddu Court
Caerphilly Business Park
Van Road
Caerphilly CF83 3ED
029 2088 7325
www.dwac.demon.co.uk
National association of disability groups in Wales. Provide information and training.*

Genetic Interest Group (GIG)
Unit 4D
Leroy House
436 Essex Road
London N1 3QP
020 7704 3141
www.gig.org.uk
Umbrella body for support groups working with those affected by specific genetic disorders.

Phab
Summit House
Wandle Road
Croydon CR0 1DF
020 8667 9443
www.phabengland.org.uk

In Wales:
029 2075 0700
Ruthin 01824 705 859
Newport 01633 263 015
www.phab.org.uk
Promotes integration between disabled and non-disabled people through social, leisure and educational activities. Local groups.

LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT
(See also 'Child' under Support and information)

Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)
73 Charlotte Street
London W1T 4PN
020 7631 0280 (admin)
020 7631 0285 (helpline Mon-Fri 10am-5pm)
www.arc-uk.org
Support and information for parents throughout antenatal testing, especially when a serious abnormality has been diagnosed and a choice has to be made about the termination of the pregnancy. Ongoing support given to parents who decide on termination. Local contacts.*

Compassionate Friends
53 North Street
Bristol BS3 1EN
0117 966 5202 (admin)
0117 953 9639 (helpline 10am-10.30pm)
www.tcf.org.uk
An organisation of and for bereaved parents and families. Advice and support. Local groups.*

CRUSE Bereavement Care
Ty Energlyn
Heol Las
Caerphilly CF83 2WP
029 2088 6913 (admin)
0870 167 1677 (all day helpline)
A nationwide service of emotional support, counselling and information to anyone bereaved by death, regardless of age, race or belief. Local groups.*

Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (Cot Death Research and Support)
Artillery House
11-19 Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT
0870 787 0885 (admin)
0870 787 0554 (24-hour helpline)
www.sids.org.uk
Support and information for parents bereaved by a sudden infant death. Gives new parents advice on reducing risk of cot death.*

Miscarriage Association
c/o Clayton Hospital
Northgate
Wakefield
W. Yorks WF1 3JS
01924 200799 (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm)
www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk
Information, advice and support for women who have had, or who are having, a miscarriage. Local contacts and groups.*

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)
28 Portland Place
London W1B 1LY
020 7436 7940 (admin)
020 7436 5881 (helpline 10am-3pm, answerphone after hours)
www.uk-sands.org
Information and a national network of support groups for bereaved parents.*

WIDWODS
c/o 60 Rocks Park
Uckfield
East Sussex TN22 2AX
01825 765084 (evenings)
Small support group of young widows aiming to provide practical and emotional support for those who experience the loss of a partner. Please include a stamped addressed envelope.

SMOKING

Smokers Helpline Wales (W)
0800 169 0 169
Counsellors offer confidential help and advice. Open daily from 7a.m. - 11 p.m.

NHS Smoking Helplines
NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline
0800 169 9 169
Open daily from 12 noon-9pm

NHS Asian Tobacco Helpline
0800 169 0 881 (Urdu)
0800 169 0 882 (Punjabi)
0800 169 0 883 (Hindi)
0800 169 0 884 (Gujarati)
0800 169 0 885 (Bengali)
Website:
www.givingupsmoking.co.uk

SPECIALISED ORGANISATIONS

Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH) Cymru
4 Llys Fedwen
Parc Menai
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 4BL
01248 671345
Support for parents of children with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus. Advice, practical and financial help. Local groups.*
www.asbah.org

Association of Parents of Vaccine Damaged Children
78 Camden Road
Shipston-on-Stour
Warwickshire CV36 4DH
01608 661595
Advises parents on claiming vaccine damage payment.

Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA)
235-237 Finchley Road
London NW3 6LS
020 7431 0033
www.clapa.com
Support for families of babies born with cleft lip and/or palate. Feeding equipment available. Local groups.*

Cystic Fibrosis Trust
11 London Road
Bromley BR1 1BY
020 8464 7211
0845 8591000 (helpine Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
www.cftrust.org.uk

Down's Syndrome Association
155 Mitcham Road
London SW17 9PG
020 8682 4001
www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

In Wales:
Suite 1
206 Whitchurch Road
Cardiff CF14 3JL
029 2052 2511
(Mon-Fri 9am-12.30pm)
Information, advice, counselling and support for parents of children with Down's syndrome. Local groups.*
www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

Haemophilia Society
Chesterfield House
385 Euston Road
London NW1 3AU
020 7380 0600
0800 0186068 (helpline Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
www.haemophilia.org.uk
Information, advice and practical help for families affected by haemophilia and other bleeding disorders. Some local groups.*

Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Elta House
Birmingham Road
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 0AQ
0870 774 3651 (admin)
0800 975 3100 (helpline)
www.jtsma.org.uk
Self-help group offering information and support to parents of children with the disease. Can put you in touch with other parents. Equipment on loan.*

MENCAP (Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults)
MENCAP National Centre
123 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0RT
020 7454 0454
www.mencap.org.uk

In Wales:
31 Lambourne Crescent
Cardiff Business Park
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5GF
029 2074 7588
Work with people with a learning disability and their families and carers. Local branches.*

Meningitis Research Foundation
Midland Way
Thornbury
Bristol BS35 2BS
01454 281811
080 8800 3344 (24-hour national helpline)
www.meningitis.org

In Wales:
Meningitis Cymru
149 Hawthorn Way
Brackla
Bridgend CF31 2PG
01656 646 414 (admin)
0800 652 9996 (helpline)
www.meningitiscymru.co.uk
Education, support and information about meningitis for people in Wales.

Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
7-11 Prescott Place
London SW4 6BS
020 7720 8055
020 7720 8055 (helpline Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
www.muscular-dystrophy.org
Support and advice through local branches and a network of Family Care Officers. Provides support for individuals and families affected by neuromuscular conditions.

Nappy Laundry Service
0121 693 4949
www.changeanappy.co.uk
Details of local services.

The Pelvic Partnership
26 Manor Green
Harwell OX11 0DQ
01235 820921
www.pelvicpartnership.org.uk
Provides information and advice about the management of SPD.*

Reach (The Association for Children with Hand or Arm Deficiency)
Reach Head Office
PO Box 54
Helston
Cornwall TR13 8WD
0845 130 6225 (Mon 9.30-3.30pm, Tue and Wed 9.30am-6pm, Thu 1pm-6pm and 8pm-10pm, Fri 9.30am-6pm)
www.reach.org.uk
Information and support to parents of children with hand or arm problems. Local groups.*

The Real Nappy Association
PO Box 3704
London SE26 4RX
020 8299 4519
www.realnappy.com
For a FREE information pack send SAE (two stamps). Or contact the Women's Environmental Network on 020 7481 9004.

SCOPE
6 Market Road
London, N7 9PW
020 7619 7100
0808 800 3333 (helpline Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 2pm-6pm)
www.scope.org.uk

In Wales:
SCOPE Cwmpas Cymru
The Wharf
Schooner Way
Cardiff CF10 4EU
029 2046 1703
Offers advice and support to parents of children with cerebral palsy. Local groups.*

SENSE Cymru (National Deaf–Blind and Rubella Association)
5 Raleigh Walk
Brigantine Place
Cardiff CF10 4LN
029 2045 7641
029 2046 4125 (Minicom)
Advice and support for families of deaf–blind and rubella-disabled children. Local groups.*
www.sense.org.uk

Sickle Cell Society
54 Station Road
Harlesden
London NW10 4UA
020 8961 7795/4006
www.sicklecellsociety.org

In Wales:
Cardiff Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Centre
Butetown Health Centre
Loundon Square Docks
Cardiff CF10 5UZ
029 2047 1055
Information, advice and counselling for families affected by sickle cell disease or trait. Financial help when needed. Local groups.*

In Wales:
Sustainable Wales Real Nappy Campaign
0845 456 2447(advice line)
www.realnappies-wales.org.uk
Provides information and advice on choosing and using anppies and nappy laundering services in Wales.

Tommy's Campaign
1 Kennington Road
London SE1 7RR
08707 707070
08707 773060 (info)
www.tommys-campaign.org
Information about problems in pregnancy including Toxoplasmosis, Pre-eclampsia, premature birth and miscarriage. Also advice on a healthy pregnancy.*

UK Hyperemesis Gravidarum Awareness Group
29 Windermere Avenue
Basingstoke RG22 5JH
07020 969 728 (info)
07050 655094 (support)
www.hyperemesis.org.uk
Support organisation run by volunteers.

The UK Thalassaemia Society
19 The Broadway
Southgate Circus
London N14 6PH
020 8882 0011
0800 731 1109 (24-hour information line)
www.ukts.org
Information, and advice for families affected by thalassaemia.*

SUPPORT FOR STRESS AND DEPRESSION

(See also Parents Advice Centre in the Coping Alone Section)

Association for Post-Natal Illness (APNI)

145 Dawes Road
London SW6 7EB
020 7386 0868
www.apni.org
Network of telephone and postal volunteers who have suffered from post-natal illness and offer information, support and encouragement on a one-to-one basis. Send a SAE for information pack.*

CRY-SIS

BM Cry-sis
London WCIN 3XX
020 7404 5011 (8am-11pm)
www.our-space.co.uk/serene.htm
Self-help and support for families with excessively crying, sleepless and demanding children. Send SAE for details.*

MIND (National Association for Mental Health)

Granta House
15-19 Broadway
London E15 4BQ
020 8519 2122 (admin)
0845 766 0163 (Mind *info* line)
www.mind.org.uk

In Wales:
3rd Floor
Quebec House
Castle Bridge
Cowbridge Road East
Cardiff CF11 9AB
029 2039 5123
Help for people experiencing mental distress. Mind *info* line offers confidential help. Local associations.*

Parentline Plus

520 Highgate Studios
53-57 Highgate Road
London NW5 1TL
0808 800 2222 (helpline, Mon-Fri 8am-10pm, Sat 9.30am-5.0pm, Sun 10am-3pm)
0800 783 6783 (text phone)
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Free confidential helpline to anyone parenting a child. Runs parenting classes and produces a range of leaflets and publications.*

INDEX

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St John Ambulance
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This book is given free to all first-time mothers in Wales.