

Preparing for

# Parenthood

Your step by step guide



# Preparing for parenthood

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# Step 1: if you think you are pregnant

Becoming pregnant can be an exciting but sometimes daunting experience for many women. This guide has been designed to give you the information you need to help you through your pregnancy and birth.

## Take a pregnancy test

You can carry out a test on a sample of urine on the first day of a missed period, from two weeks after your baby was conceived. A positive test is almost certainly correct, a negative result can be less reliable. If you get a negative result but think you may be pregnant wait for a week and try again, or see a GP.

### Where to get a test

Pregnancy tests are available at pharmacists, or you may be able to get a free test from your GP, walk-in health centre or sexual health clinic.

- > **Pregnancy advice and free testing information for young people in South Gloucestershire can be found here [www.tinyurl.com/preg-adv](http://www.tinyurl.com/preg-adv)**
- > **For a free test call Bristol Sexual Health Services on 0117 342 6900 to find your nearest sexual health clinic drop-in session or to book an appointment**



## Once you know you are pregnant

You need to consider your options. You could:

- choose to keep the baby and become a parent
- choose to end the pregnancy by having a termination
- choose to have the baby adopted.

**Further support and information at:**

- > **Family Planning Association** [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)
  - > **NHS website** [www.nbt.nhs.uk/maternity-services](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/maternity-services)
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## Talk to your GP

Whether or not you've done a pregnancy test, it is important you see a GP or midwife as soon as you think you are pregnant.

Your GP or midwife will treat the pregnancy confidentially, even if you are under 16, and tell you about your choices regarding antenatal, or pregnancy care. If you have a pre-existing physical or mental health condition you should let your GP

know that you are pregnant as soon as possible. It is important that you get an expected due date (the date your baby will be born) as this will be the information you'll need when claiming benefits or taking maternity leave.

- > **If you're not registered, find a practice near to you at** [www.tinyurl.com/sgfind-gp](http://www.tinyurl.com/sgfind-gp)
- > **Use the NHS due date calculator to work out when your baby will be born:** [www.tinyurl.com/calcu-date](http://www.tinyurl.com/calcu-date)

## No Worries!

A scheme for young people to get relationship and sexual health advice and services in South Gloucestershire.

- > **Visit** [www.no-worries.youthunltd.com](http://www.no-worries.youthunltd.com) **or call** 0117 342 6900.

## Family Nurse Partnership

If you are aged under 19 and less than 28 weeks pregnant with your first baby you may be entitled to extra support.

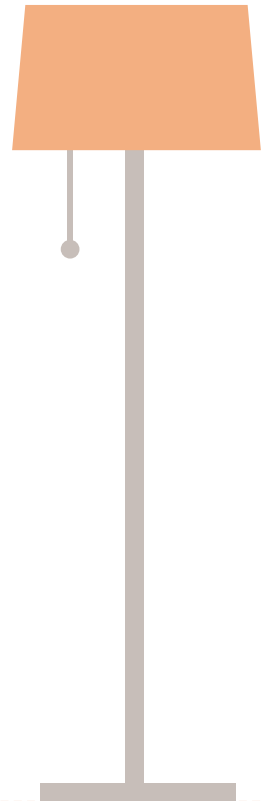
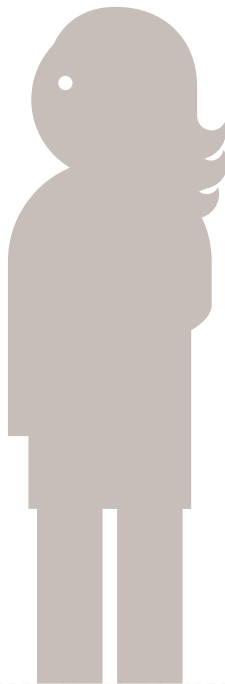
The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a voluntary home visiting programme for first time young mums and dads.

A specially trained family nurse visits regularly, from early pregnancy until the child is two.

The service is offered across South Gloucestershire, Bristol and north Somerset.

You can ask to be referred to the partnership by your GP or midwife or you can refer yourself.

> For more information visit [www.fnp.nhs.uk/young-mums](http://www.fnp.nhs.uk/young-mums)



# Step 2: staying healthy

Your GP and midwife will provide plenty of information to help you make the right decisions about your health.

For information about your health, diet, alcohol and smoking in relation to your pregnancy visit [www.tinyurl.com/NHS-healthyreg](http://www.tinyurl.com/NHS-healthyreg).

There are lots of websites with information about pregnancy and birth, or you could visit your local library.

> Visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby)

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## Healthy Start vouchers

Some pregnant women and families will qualify for food vouchers under the Healthy Start scheme.

The vouchers can be used to buy milk and plain fresh and frozen vegetables at local shops. You'll also get coupons that can be exchanged for free vitamins locally.

You qualify for Healthy Start if you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old and you and your family get:

- Income support
- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

- Child Tax Credit (but only if your family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Working Tax Credit (but only if your family is receiving the 4 week 'run-on' payment).

If you are pregnant and under 18 years old, you qualify for Healthy Start vouchers whatever you earn.

If you are claiming Universal Credit and are pregnant or have a child under four years old, call the Healthy Start helpline on 0345 607 6823 for information about any support that may be available.

> More information at [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk), or 0345 607 6823

> For free pregnancy and baby emails sign up to NHS 'Start 4 Life' at [www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

> To find out where you can get Healthy Start vitamins in South Gloucestershire visit [www.tinyurl.com/hs-vits](http://www.tinyurl.com/hs-vits)

## Where to have your baby

There are a number of places you can choose to have your baby in South Gloucestershire; discuss with your midwife or GP.

You can change your mind about where to have your baby at any time during your pregnancy.

Local choices include:

- home birth
- midwife-led birth centres providing a comfortable environment with birth pools at Cossham Hospital,

Southmead Hospital, St Michael's Hospital and Ashcombe Birth Centre (Weston General Hospital)

- Obstetric units at St Michael's Hospital and Southmead Hospital – these are advised if you have a medical condition or have had a previous complicated pregnancy, or if there is a complication during your pregnancy.

> **More options for giving birth at [www.tinyurl.com/sgbaby-serv](http://www.tinyurl.com/sgbaby-serv)**

### Maternity Voices

A South Gloucestershire group which offers lots of information and support for pregnancy and beyond.

> **Visit the website at [www.maternityvoices.org.uk](http://www.maternityvoices.org.uk)**

### National Childbirth Trust

Support, information and friendship to new parents and parents-to-be.

The South Gloucestershire branch offers a variety of activities and services, including antenatal classes, home birth group, local coffee morning groups, breastfeeding support, nearly new sales and social events.

> **More info at 0300 330 0700; [southglosnct@googlemail.com](mailto:southglosnct@googlemail.com) or [www.nct.org.uk/branches/south-gloucestershire](http://www.nct.org.uk/branches/south-gloucestershire)**

# Step 3: claiming benefits

## Maternity Allowance (MA)

If you do not have a job and find you are pregnant you can make a claim for Maternity Allowance.

This is a benefit which is paid to pregnant women by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus.

There are a number of conditions that have to be in place for you to qualify for this. **This is a complicated subject and you may find it easier to contact South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice or North Bristol Advice Centre for help.**

You may also be entitled to MA if any of the following apply to you:

- you are employed, but not eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). See page 15 to see if you qualify for SMP
- you are registered self-employed and paying Class 2 National Insurance Contributions (NICs), or hold a Small Earnings Exception certificate

- you have recently been employed or self-employed
- you are not employed or self-employed, but you regularly work in the business of your self-employed spouse or civil partner.

You can claim MA when you reach the 14th week before the week in which your baby is due (the 27th week of pregnancy). Ask Jobcentre Plus for an MA Claim pack on 0800 055 66 88. You can also get an MA claim pack from your maternity clinic or child health clinic.

While you are receiving MA you cannot claim Jobseeker's Allowance. You may still be entitled to benefits such as Income Support, but the amount you get will be reduced by the amount of MA.

> Contact South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice on 03444 111 444 or visit [www.southgloscab.org.uk](http://www.southgloscab.org.uk)

> Contact North Bristol Advice Centre on 0117 951 5751 or visit [www.northbristoladvice.org.uk](http://www.northbristoladvice.org.uk)



## The two basic rules of Maternity Allowance

To qualify for MA, you have to satisfy two basic rules: the **employment rule** and the **earnings rule**. You have to satisfy these rules in a test period which is 66 weeks up to and including the week before the week your baby is due.

### The employment rule

- You must have been employed and/or self-employed for at least 26 weeks in your 66 week test period
- The 26 weeks do not have to be continuous and it doesn't matter how much you earn
- You don't have to be actually physically at work to be employed or self-employed; you might be off work sick or have been on Statutory Maternity Leave for an earlier pregnancy for example
- Weeks when you have not worked a full week count towards your 26 weeks
- If you are self-employed, you must be registered as such with HM Revenue & Customs according to their rules.

### The earnings rule

Your earnings, on average, must be at least equal to the Maternity Allowance Threshold (MAT) which applies at the beginning of your test period. The MAT is £30 a week so you must earn on average at least £30 a week. If you have more than one employer, you must work out an average from all your earnings.

**If your MA claim is disallowed, you may be able to continue to claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) after the beginning of the 11th week before the week in which your baby is due.**

## Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

This benefit offers you financial support if you cannot work because of illness or disability.

If you do not qualify for Maternity Allowance you may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). This will depend on your National Insurance (NI) contributions in recent years.

This benefit can be paid for six weeks before the week your baby is due and for 14 days after your baby is born.

If you are receiving benefits you should tell Jobcentre Plus about

your pregnancy and you will automatically be considered for ESA.

You cannot receive both Maternity Allowance and contributory ESA because of the overlapping benefit rules. If you claim both, you will receive only the benefit paid at the higher rate. A claim for ESA can be treated as a claim for Maternity Allowance and vice versa.

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## Jobseeker's Allowance

If you are a single woman claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) you can continue to do so whilst pregnant, but you have to meet the conditions of the work agreement and be available for work or training.

It cannot be claimed from the period which begins six weeks before the baby is due until two weeks after the baby is born. Once your baby is born, as a single parent with a dependent, you would be automatically entitled to claim Income Support.

If you have a partner (you don't need to be married) you are not considered to be single. Your partner might be able to make a joint claim for JSA. Once the baby is born, you can claim Child Tax Credit, see page 11.

> **Claim for JSA at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**

> **Claim for JSA, ESA or Income Support by calling Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688**

## Tax credits

There are two types of tax credits – Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

**Child Tax Credit** can be claimed for each child you're responsible for if they're aged under 16, or under 20 and in approved education/training. You don't need to be working to claim Child Tax Credit. How much you get depends on your circumstances.

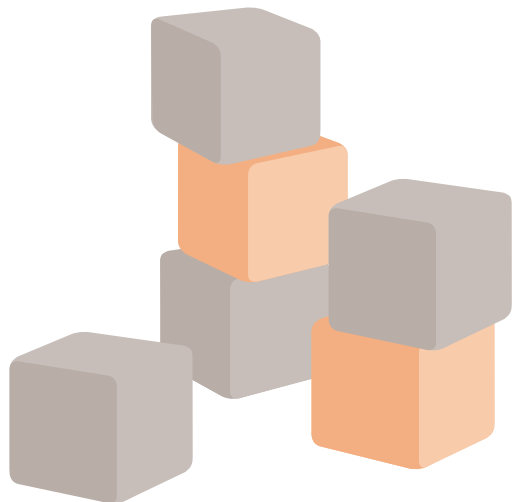
**Working Tax Credit** helps people on low incomes. You could get Working Tax Credit if: you're aged from 16 to 24 and have a child or a qualifying disability; or you're 25 or over, with or without children. To qualify you must work a certain

number of hours a week, get paid for the work you do (or expect to) and have an income below a certain level.

The basic amount of Working Tax Credit is up to £1,940 a year – you could get more (or less) depending on your circumstances and income.

You can claim Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit if you are receiving Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance. You can claim Child Tax Credit if you already have a child, or once the new baby is born if it is your first child.

> **Work out how much you can claim at [www.gov.uk/tax-credits-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/tax-credits-calculator)**



## Claiming child benefit

You can claim for child benefit for each child you are responsible for whether you are working or on benefits.

The payment is tax-free as long as neither parent earns more than £50,000 a year.

Make sure you make your claim before your baby is three months old. Even if you think you won't be entitled to anything because either you or your partner earns over the limit, you should still claim – otherwise you'll miss out on a number of other entitlements.

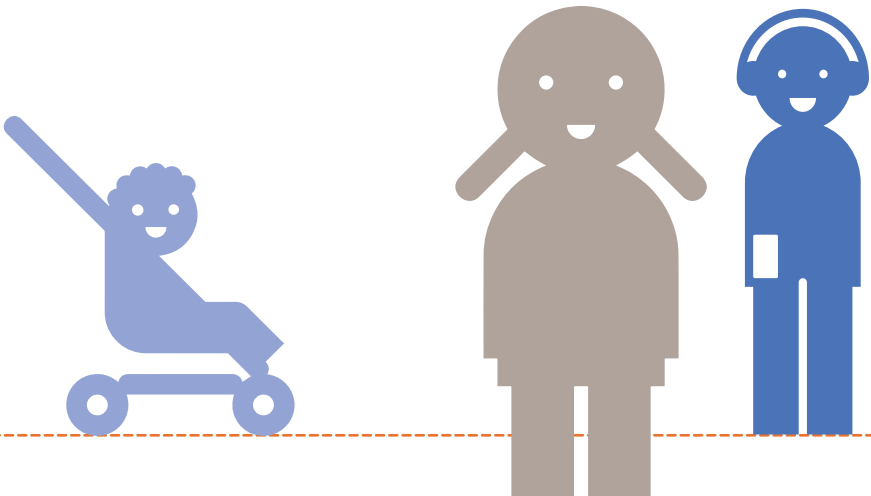
Making a claim for Child Benefit will help you protect your State Pension if you're at home looking after your baby or children and not paying National Insurance, as you'll

get credits towards your State Pension even if you don't get Child Benefit.

You can claim for each child aged under 16 years, or a young person under 20 years if they are still in approved full-time education up to A level or similar, or on certain approved training courses.

If you're not sure you can claim and for more information on the rules for making a claim, visit the gov.uk website at [www.gov.uk/child-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit) or call the Child Benefit Helpline on 0300 200 3100.

**To claim, fill in a child benefit claim form and send to the child benefit office along with your child's birth certificate. Complete the form online at [www.tinyurl.com/gov-childbenefit](http://www.tinyurl.com/gov-childbenefit)**



## Sure Start Maternity Grant

The Sure Start Maternity Grant is a one-off payment of £500 to help with the cost of a new baby.

You usually qualify for the grant if:

- you're expecting your first child – or you're expecting a multiple birth (e.g. twins) and have children already
- you already get certain benefits.

You must claim the grant within 11 weeks of the baby's due date or within three months of the baby's birth. You don't have to pay the grant back and it won't affect your other benefits or tax credits.

> **For information about other benefits contact South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice or North Bristol Advice Centre or visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

### What is form MATB1?

Also known as a 'maternity certificate', you will need a MATB1 certificate to claim maternity benefits and to arrange maternity leave with your employer.

Your doctor or midwife will give you the MATB1 certificate after you reach the 20th week before the week in which your baby is due (the 21st week of pregnancy). It cannot be given any sooner than this.

Your midwife will usually give you this at your next antenatal appointment after the 21st week of your pregnancy. If you have not received it, you should ask for it at this time.

If you are claiming Maternity Allowance you will need to provide the MATB1 certificate to Jobcentre Plus.

If you are claiming Statutory Maternity Pay you will need to give the original form to your employer no later than 25 weeks into your pregnancy (or at least 15 weeks before your due date).

Make a copy of the form as you'll need it for other pregnancy benefits, such as free dental care.

# Step 4: pregnancy and work

If you are working, the latest you can tell your employer that you are pregnant is the 15th week before your baby is due.

This is called the notification week. It is likely you will want to tell them before this as you will need to take time off for antenatal appointments.

You will need to tell your employer:

- that you want to receive statutory maternity pay
- the date you want to go on maternity leave. The earliest you can start your maternity leave is 11 weeks before your baby is due.

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## Your statutory rights

There are a number of rights for pregnant women given by the law. These are known as statutory rights.

All pregnant women have the following:

- the right to take paid time off work for ante-natal care
- the right to work in a safe environment
- the right to claim discrimination and unfair dismissal if dismissed because of pregnancy or maternity leave
- the right to take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave

- the right to return to work after you have had the baby. A refusal to allow you to return to work after having your baby will be a dismissal and will also be discrimination.

Some pregnant women also have the right to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP).

> **If you feel your rights are not being upheld talk to South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice or visit the Acas website at [www.acas.co.uk](http://www.acas.co.uk)**

## Maternity leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to Maternity Leave.

It is broken into two periods, both of 26 weeks. They are **Ordinary Maternity Leave** and **Additional Maternity Leave**.

Additional Maternity Leave starts immediately after Ordinary Maternity Leave so women have 52 weeks' (one year) maternity leave in total.

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## Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

This is a weekly payment made by employers to their employees or former employees. Employers have to pay SMP if you have been employed by them prior to becoming pregnant and during your pregnancy.

### Qualifying for SMP

The key date is 15 weeks before your baby is officially due. If you've been working for the same employer continuously for at least 26 weeks before that date and earning enough (£112 a week in 2015-16), you're eligible for SMP.

If you qualify, you will receive it whether you intend to return to work or not. The amount paid depends on how much you earn

and it is paid for a maximum period of 39 weeks.

If you don't qualify, you may be able to claim Maternity Allowance. See page 8.

### How much do you get?

**Weeks 1-6:** 90% of your average weekly earnings before tax.

**Weeks 7-39:** £139.58 in 2015-16 – or 90% of your earnings if that's less.

Always check your contract of employment – you may find your employer offers more generous terms than the statutory amount.

## Working out your Statutory Maternity Pay

The important date for working out your SMP is the date your baby is due, not the date that your baby is actually born. The week in which your baby is due is referred to as the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

If your employer refuses to pay SMP, you can complain to HM Revenue and Customs which will decide whether or not you should be getting SMP. This is complicated, so enlist the help of an expert by contacting South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice.

- > To work out the date you qualify for SMP visit the gov.uk website at [www.tinyurl.com/smp-ewc](http://www.tinyurl.com/smp-ewc)
- > For advice about Statutory Maternity Pay contact HM Revenue & Customs Employee Helpline on 0300 200 3500
- > More information about Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance at the gov.uk website [www.tinyurl.com/gov-smp-ma](http://www.tinyurl.com/gov-smp-ma)
- > More information is available from Citizens Advice at [www.tinyurl.com/adv-parentalrights](http://www.tinyurl.com/adv-parentalrights)

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### Maternity Action

Advice and information about rights and entitlements during pregnancy, maternity leave and returning to work.

> visit [www.maternityaction.org.uk](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk) or call 0845 600 8533



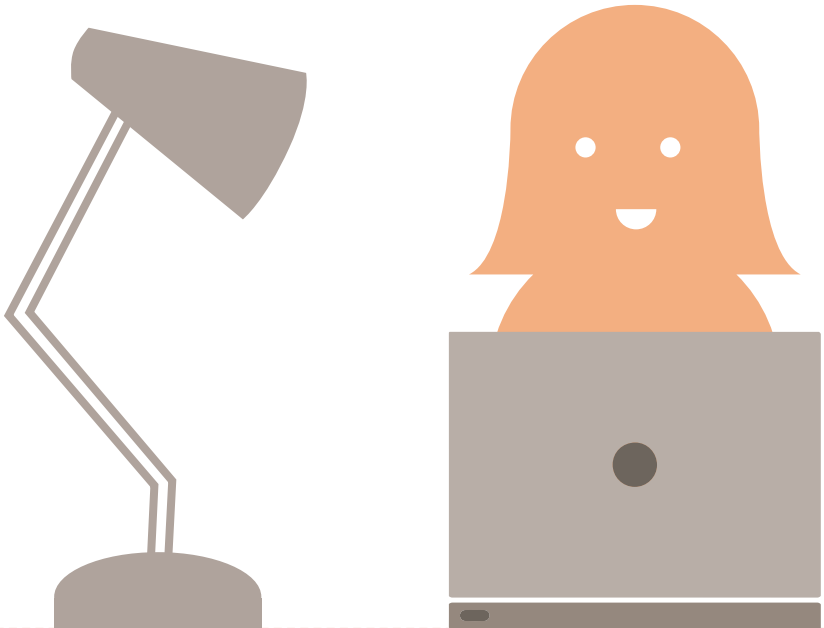
## Keeping in touch days

You are allowed to work as an employed or self-employed person for up to 10 days during your Maternity Allowance Period without losing any MA. These special days are known as Keeping in Touch (KIT) days.

KIT days are intended to help you keep in touch with your workplace or, if you are self-employed, with your business. They enable you to do some work without affecting your MA and could also help ease your return to work.

If you are on maternity leave from your employer, you and your employer must agree that you can work on those days. Your rate of pay for KIT days must be agreed with your employer. Remember your employer does not have any right to insist that you work.

> For more information on KIT days visit [www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave](http://www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave)



# Step 5: rights of working parents

These rights apply to parents in same-sex as well as in opposite-sex relationships, as well as casual relationships, marriages and civil partnerships.

Working parents have the following legal rights:

- paid and unpaid maternity leave
- paid paternity leave
- paid and unpaid adoption leave
- to request flexible working hours
- unpaid parental leave for parents of children under five (18 if your child is disabled)
- unpaid time off to deal with unexpected problems with the care of dependents.

## Paternity leave

If you are a working father, you are entitled to one or two weeks' paternity leave when you and your partner have a child. Most fathers will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay for their paternity leave

Statutory Paternity Pay is paid at the same rate as Statutory Maternity Pay (see page 15).

For more information visit Citizens Advice at [www.tinyurl.com/adv-patleave](http://www.tinyurl.com/adv-patleave)

## Shared parental leave

A new flexible system of shared parental leave was introduced in April 2015. Now you will be able to share up to 52 weeks' parental leave and 39 weeks' pay.

If your employer agrees, you can take the leave in up to three separate blocks, so you can switch arrangements if you need to.

For more information visit Citizens Advice at [www.tinyurl.com/sharedleave](http://www.tinyurl.com/sharedleave) or [www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay](http://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay)

# Pregnancy and maternity discrimination

This is when you are treated unfairly at work because you are pregnant or have recently had a baby and you suffer a disadvantage because of this treatment. You are protected against this by employment law.

To show unfavourable treatment you don't have to compare your treatment to someone else's, a man for instance. You just need to show you were treated unfavourably.

## Claiming unlawful sex discrimination

To claim unlawful sex discrimination you have to make a claim to an employment tribunal. If the result is in your favour, your company may have to pay you compensation. The important thing to do is to get advice as soon as possible. If you're a trade union member, get advice from them. Or get advice from an experienced adviser, for example, at a Citizens Advice office.

Some examples of unfavourable treatment would be:

- you're suspended from work by your employer for health and safety reasons and don't receive full pay

- you're dismissed because your employer says they can't afford to pay statutory maternity pay
- you can't go to a disciplinary meeting due to a pregnancy-related illness and your employer refuses to re-arrange the meeting
- you're disciplined for having performance issues due to a pregnancy-related illness
- your employer fails to carry out a health and safety risk assessment, forcing you to resign
- you're turned down for a job when the employer learns you're pregnant.

Once you've had your baby, it's also unlawful to discriminate against you for any of these reasons:

- You're on maternity leave
- You've been on maternity leave
- You've tried to take maternity leave to which you are entitled.

> **More information from Citizens Advice at**  
[www.tinyurl.com/adv-mat-dis](http://www.tinyurl.com/adv-mat-dis)

## Breastfeeding

Although your employer does not have to allow you time off to breastfeed your baby, they should try to accommodate you if you want to keep breastfeeding after your return to work.

If your employer says you can't change your working patterns to breastfeed your baby or does not allow you to express milk at work, you may be able to claim unlawful sex discrimination.

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## Your rights when returning to work after maternity leave

After you have had your baby you have the right to go back to the same job on the same terms and conditions as before you went on maternity leave.

You must give your employer plenty of notice if you plan to go back early or want to ask for flexible working arrangements.

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

If you want to return to work before the end of your maternity leave, you must give your employer at least 8 weeks' notice of your return date. 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 8 weeks or until the end of your leave, whichever is earlier.

You do not need to give any notice of return if you are going back

to work at the end of 52 weeks' maternity leave. Simply go to work on the day that you are due back.

If you intend to take shared parental leave (SPL) after your maternity leave or your partner is going to share some of your leave, you must give at least 8 weeks' notice of your entitlement and intention to take SPL as well as notice to book periods of leave.

Deadlines for telling your employer:

- You must give your employer eight weeks' notice if you want to return to work earlier or later than your agreed date
- It will typically take around 14 weeks from your request for flexible working to implementing new arrangements, assuming your employer agrees.

# Step 6: planning for your baby

## Work out a budget

Whether you are deciding to go back to work, or if you are unemployed, you are likely to see a drop in your family income when you become pregnant and stop working.

Once you know what benefits or maternity pay you will be receiving it can be helpful to work out a budget.

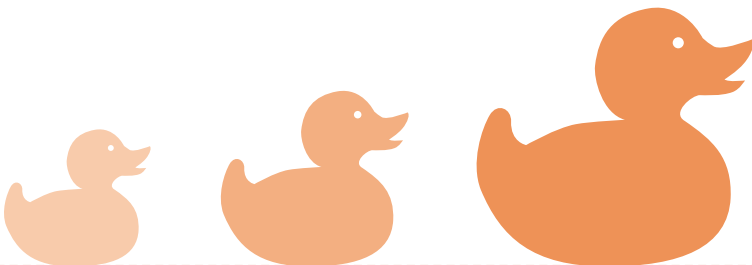
Your income is likely to change, especially if you are planning to stop work or cut your hours.

As well as your regular household outgoings, make sure you include all those new items you will need once your baby is born, from a car seat, bedding and clothes to nappies, baby food and childcare.

Items like buggies and cots can be very expensive, check in the small ads of your local paper or use auction sites like eBay to find less costly alternatives.

If your income will be stretched, you may need to look at cutting back. A good starting point is to divide your outgoings into essential and non-essential items.

- You can save on essentials like household bills, especially utility bills, and groceries by shopping around
- Next, look at non-essentials, these are things like gym memberships, magazine subscriptions, even that lunchtime sandwich from the local shop.



## Reduce your debts

With some debts, like credit cards, it's really important not to stick your head in the sand and only pay the minimum each month. If you do that, you'll never pay it off. Take some time to deal with them now and it'll save you money in the long term.

Prioritise bills which would lead to serious problems if they went unpaid (such as your mortgage, rent, water, council tax and utility bills). Contact the people you owe

money to as soon as possible if you're struggling with repayments.

## Open a savings account

If you are able to put some money aside it is a good idea to open a savings account to help cover the costs of your baby and see you through a period of reduced income.

You may want to open an account which offers instant access to your savings. Visit [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com) for up-to-date savings account information.

> **The Money Advice Service has a great budget planner at [www.tinyurl.com/masbudget](http://www.tinyurl.com/masbudget)**

> **If you think you might find it difficult to cope with your changing financial situation visit South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice or North Bristol Advice Centre.**

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## Child maintenance

Both parents are legally responsible for the financial costs of bringing up a child.

If you split up and you are the parent who doesn't have the main day-to-day care of your child, you may have to pay money to your former partner. This is called child maintenance, it is also known as child support.

As long as both parties are happy you can make this arrangement

yourself or use a government scheme. If your situation is complicated you may need to go to court to make the arrangements.

> **Visit Citizens Advice website for more information about child maintenance [www.tinyurl.com/adv-maintenance](http://www.tinyurl.com/adv-maintenance)**

## If you need extra support

Sadly, not every pregnancy ends well. If you lose your baby or it's born with a disability or illness, you'll need extra support.

There are many charities that will be able to help with practical and emotional support. Your midwife, health visitor or GP will be able to give you more information.

- > **Support and advice around stillbirth and neo-natal death at [www.uk-sands.org/support](http://www.uk-sands.org/support)**
- > **Support and advice for parents of babies born ill or prematurely at [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)**

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## If your housing needs change

If your present housing won't be adequate with a new baby, you should make sure you're registered with South Gloucestershire HomeChoice.

This may give you a chance to bid for more suitable accommodation. South Gloucestershire Council can also give you advice about where to look for private rented housing. Do make sure you tell them when your baby's born so that your details are up to date and accurate.

- > **Visit the HomeChoice website at [www.homechoice.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.homechoice.southglos.gov.uk) or telephone 01454 868005.**



# Step 7: after your baby is born

## Registering the birth

You must register the birth within 42 days of your baby being born.

If your baby is born in South Gloucestershire you can register the birth at any of the register offices. These are in Yate One Stop Shop (West Walk, Yate Shopping Centre) and Kingswood Civic Centre. You will need to make an appointment in advance to register a birth.

If your baby was born outside of the area, e.g. at Southmead Hospital, you can still provide your local register office with the details and they will pass them on to the registrar that covers that area.

If you are married at the time of the birth, either parent can register the birth. If you are not married and you want the details of the father to appear on the birth certificate, both of you need to attend to register the birth and sign the register or declaration. If the father's name is not included on the birth certificate at the time of the registration, it can be entered at a later date.

There is specific information you need in order to register, ensure you have it all to hand before you visit. For detailed information, visit the South Gloucestershire Council website at [www.tinyurl.com/sg-birth](http://www.tinyurl.com/sg-birth)

South Gloucestershire libraries run free fun sessions for parents and babies, drop in to your local library to find out more, or visit [www.tinyurl.com/sg-libraries](http://www.tinyurl.com/sg-libraries). It's a great way to meet other parents and doesn't cost a penny.





## Support and care

You may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility that having a baby brings. There are lots of organisations to help you through these times.

Health services for parents include:

**GP** – you can contact your GP at any time if it is for you or your child. Many GPs will see babies at the beginning of surgery, or without an appointment. Most GPs provide developmental reviews and vaccinations. Register your baby with your GP as early as possible after they are born. If you don't have a GP see page 4 for information about how to register.

**Health visitors** – a health visitor will usually visit you for the first time around 10 days after your baby is born. After that you will see them at the child health

clinic, although you can make an appointment to see them at any time. If you're bringing up a baby on your own or struggling, your health visitor will probably come and check in to see if you need any help.

**Child Health Clinics** – these are run by health visitors and doctors. You can talk about problems to do with your child and many offer extra services like parent groups, breastfeeding advice and other support groups.

**Other organisations which offer help and support** – South Gloucestershire Council runs children's centres in six locations at Cadbury Health, Filton, Kingswood, Patchway, Staplehill and Yate, as well as outreach services. They offer support and advice for parents of children aged up to five years old. Many centres offer special groups like support for dads or teenage parents.

> **For links to each centre visit the council website at [www.tinyurl.com/sg-centres](http://www.tinyurl.com/sg-centres)**

### Feel anxious, stressed or worried?

Talk to your health visitor, doctor or midwife – they can give you advice and suggest places where you can get help.

# Looking for childcare

As your child grows you may want them to spend time learning and playing in childcare and early education.

Your options could include a childminder, pre-school, day nursery, nursery class or out-of-school club.

The Government provides childcare funding for all three to four years olds. Some younger than this may be eligible for funding. You can claim a free place based on financial circumstances online if you claim any of the following:

- Working Tax Credits and your family has annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190
- Universal Credit and your family has an annual gross earnings of no more than £16,190
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance

> **Check what is available in your area with the Children and Young People Information Service on 01454 868008**

> **Search for childcare using [www.1bigdatabase.org.uk](http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk)**

- Income Support
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.

**The Government is reviewing benefits for working age parents, so these details may change in the future.**

## Employee of South Gloucestershire Council?

South Gloucestershire Council runs a scheme where staff can exchange part of their salary for vouchers.

> **For more about this and childcare in the area visit [www.tinyurl.com/sg-childcare](http://www.tinyurl.com/sg-childcare)**

Currently, all three and four-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours a week of free early education or childcare a year.

The new Childcare Bill, announced in May 2015, would double this entitlement for working parents with a household income of less than £150,000. The change had been due to come into force from September 2017, but some working parents will be entitled to the extra help when pilots begin in September 2016.

# Checklist

- If you think you are pregnant – take a pregnancy test
- Register with a GP if you do not already have one
- Make an appointment to see your GP
- Get an expected due date for your baby
- Investigate Healthy Start vouchers
- Sign up for the NHS Start for Life programme
- Choose where to have your baby
- Find out if you can claim Maternity Allowance
- Get your form MATB1 (after 20 weeks)
- Find out about child tax credit or working tax credit
- Make a claim for child benefit
- Find out if you qualify for a Sure Start grant
- If you are working, tell your employer you are pregnant (by the 15th week before your baby is due)
- Make a claim for Statutory Maternity Pay
- Register with Homechoice if you think your housing may not be adequate
- Work out a budget
- Register the birth of your baby
- Get support if you need it
- Look into childcare

# Contacts



## Face-to-face advice

South Gloucestershire CAB

[www.southgloscab.org.uk](http://www.southgloscab.org.uk), telephone 03444 111 444

North Bristol Advice Centre

[www.northbristoladvice.org.uk](http://www.northbristoladvice.org.uk), telephone 0117 951 5751

## Online advice

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Telephone advice

Adviceline 03444 111 444

## Further help

Advice Centres for Avon

[www.acfa.org.uk](http://www.acfa.org.uk)

Maternity Action

[www.maternityaction.org.uk](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk)

Maternity voices

[www.maternityvoices.org.uk](http://www.maternityvoices.org.uk)

National Childbirth Trust

[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

NHS Healthy Start

[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

NHS Start 4 Life

[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

South Gloucestershire Council

[www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

This guide has been prepared by South Gloucestershire Citizens Advice Bureau on behalf of the Advice South Gloucestershire partnership, in partnership with:



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