



Approver	Operations Committee
Pre Board Committee Scrutiny	Executive Team, Leadership Group, Staff Consultation(JCC)
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Title	Maternity Policy (and Procedure(s))
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Revised by	Director of Finance and Business Support and HR Manager
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Related Documents	Maternity Leave Procedures Shared Parental Leave Procedures Adoption Leave Procedures Paternity Leave Procedures Parental Leave Procedures Absence Management Policy & Procedure Annual Leave Policy & Procedure Pay and Benefits Policy Special Leave Policy
Location of Electronic Copy	F:\Live Policies\HR

1. VIEWPOINT'S VALUES

1.1 Viewpoint is here to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision, which is supported by the following straightforward set of values:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words;
- Say 'yes I can, and I will;'
- Celebrate age, experience, and wisdom;
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions;
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a "loved one;"
- Work hard, have fun and laugh;
- Stay courageous, creative, and ahead of the game; and
- Work with those that share our values.

1.2 These promises shape us. They are a commitment to our tenants, residents, staff, and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision, and project we embark on.

1.3 Ensuring that we have systems and processes in place will support us to deliver those plans, decisions, and projects, in accordance with our vision and values.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 This Policy sets out the Maternity Leave to which Viewpoint employees are entitled.

1.2 As well as wanting to ensure that employees are fully and promptly informed of the benefits for which they are eligible, Viewpoint has a statutory duty to protect the Health & Safety of employees who are pregnant and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that working conditions contribute to a healthy pregnancy.

1.3 It is essential for employees who are pregnant to contact the Human Resources Team for information and advice at the earliest possible date. Contact will remain confidential.

1.4 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Shared Parental Leave procedures as some rights contained in this Procedures will be rescinded should the employee decide to curtail their Maternity Leave and opt into (and are eligible for) the shared parental leave scheme.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 Viewpoint's Maternity Leave Policy extends beyond traditional maternity scenarios to encompass a broader spectrum of family dynamics. In addition to supporting expectant mothers, this policy also includes provisions for paternity leave, recognising the crucial role fathers play in the early stages of a child's life. Furthermore, we understand that building a family can take various forms, which is why our policy also covers adoption leave. Whether an employee is welcoming a biological child or expanding their family through adoption, they are entitled to the same level of support and time off to bond with their new addition. By embracing the diversity of family structures and experiences, we

aim to create an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and supported during life-changing events.

3.0 AIM

3.1 The aim of our Maternity Leave Policy is to foster a workplace culture that prioritises the well-being of both employees and their families. By extending support beyond traditional maternity scenarios, we aim to recognise and accommodate the diverse experiences of parenthood and support employees with the time and resources they need to navigate the joys and challenges of parenthood while maintaining a fulfilling and successful career.

4.0 LEGISLATION / RELATED POLICY

4.1 The legislation governing parental leave, including maternity, paternity, and adoption leave, is primarily covered by the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999 (as amended). These laws outline the rights and entitlements of employees to take leave for the birth or adoption of a child, as well as the eligibility criteria, duration of leave, and statutory pay provisions. Additionally, the Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014 provide further provisions for shared parental leave between parents, allowing them to share the care of their child in a more flexible manner. These regulations aim to support working parents in balancing their professional and family responsibilities while promoting gender equality in the workplace.

5.0 MATERNITY LEAVE

5.1 All pregnant employees (regardless of length of service) have the right in law to take up to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave and up to a further 26 weeks' additional maternity leave and to resume work afterwards. The employee is therefore entitled to a total period of 52 weeks' maternity leave. Additional maternity leave follows on immediately from the end of the period of ordinary maternity leave, but the employee can choose to be on leave for the shorter period than the maximum.

5.2 All employees who take maternity leave have the right to return to work at any time during either ordinary maternity leave or additional maternity leave (except during the first two weeks from the day of childbirth), subject to their following the correct notification procedures as set out below.

5.4 Whether any payment is receivable during Maternity Leave will be subject to conditions set out below.

5.0 STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY (SMP)

5.1 Employees who have been continuously employed by the organisation for at least 26 weeks at the end of their qualifying week and are still employed during that week will also qualify for statutory maternity pay, providing that:

- they are still pregnant 11 weeks before the start of the expected week of childbirth (or have already given birth);
- they have provided a MAT B1 form stating their expected week of childbirth; and
- their average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions.

- 5.2 Statutory maternity pay is payable for up to 39 weeks of which:
- the first six weeks payable at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings;
 - The remaining 33 weeks is payable at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate. It is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions.
- 5.3 Payment of statutory maternity pay cannot start prior to the 11th week before the employee's expected week of childbirth. It can start from any day of the week in accordance with the date the employee starts their maternity leave.
- 5.4 Statutory maternity pay is payable whether or not the employee intends to return to work after their maternity leave.
- 5.5 Employees who are not entitled to statutory maternity pay may be entitled to receive maternity allowance payable directly by the Government. If an employee is not entitled to statutory maternity pay, the organisation will provide the employee with an SMP1 form to allow them to pursue a claim for maternity allowance.
- 5.6 The current rate of SMP can be obtained from the HR Team.

6.0 TIMING OF MATERNITY LEAVE

- 6.1 Ordinary maternity leave can start at any time after the beginning of the 11th week before the employee's expected week of childbirth (unless their child is born prematurely before that date in which case it will start earlier). Maternity leave will start on whichever date is the earlier of:
- the employee's chosen start date;
 - the day after the employee gives birth; or
 - the day after any day on which the employee is absent for a pregnancy-related reason in the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

7.0 ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

- 7.1 All pregnant employees are entitled to reasonable time off with pay for antenatal appointments made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner.
- 7.2 A partner of a pregnant woman has the right to take time off work to go to two antenatal appointments. This time off will be normally be paid.

8.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

- 8.1 Like any employer, Viewpoint has a duty to protect the Health and Safety at work of all employees and others, including new and expecting mothers, and to assess risks to their health and safety.
- 8.2 New and expectant mothers may be particularly at risk from different physical, biological, and chemical agents, processes and working conditions. These risks will vary depending on the employee's state of health, and at different stages in the pregnancy.

8.3 While this Policy is specifically concerned with maternity leave and pay, it is important to note that the term 'new & expectant mothers' (whose health and safety is referred to in this section) includes:

- those who are pregnant;
- those who have given birth within the last six months, and
- those who are breastfeeding.

8.4 It is important that employees in any of these categories take steps to ensure that they and Viewpoint can assess any risks they may face at work and take reasonable practicable steps to remove hazards or prevent exposure to risks.

9.0 SICKNESS ABSENCE

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

10.0 RIGHTS DURING MATERNITY LEAVE

10.1 During ordinary maternity leave and additional maternity leave, the terms and conditions of the employee's contract except normal pay will continue. Salary will be replaced by statutory maternity pay if the employee is eligible for it. This means that, while sums payable by way of salary will cease, other benefits such as holiday entitlement will remain in place.

10.2 The organisation's pension contributions will continue based on the employee's normal pay during ordinary maternity leave and paid additional maternity leave. However, the organisation's pension contributions will cease during any periods of unpaid additional maternity leave. (The employee will remain in Viewpoint's life assurance scheme.)

11.0 CONTACT DURING MATERNITY LEAVE

11.1 The organisation reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with employees during maternity leave. This may be to discuss employees' plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease their return to work or to update them on developments at work during their absence or to arrange KIT Days (keeping in touch days).

KIT Days

11.2 An employee and an employer can agree to up to ten KIT days (keeping in touch days) throughout the period of maternity leave. These are optional days which can be worked (or to attend training) in order for the employee to remain in contact with their workplace. These days are paid at the individual's normal rate and do not affect SMP and maybe taken at any stage during the maternity leave, except within the first two weeks after the baby is born.

12.0 RETURNING TO WORK AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE

- 12.1 The employee has the right to resume working in the same job if returning to work from ordinary maternity leave. If the employee returns to work after a period of additional maternity leave, they are entitled to return either to the same job or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another suitable job that is on terms and conditions not less favourable.
- 12.2 Failure to return to work by the end of maternity leave will be treated as an unauthorised absence unless the employee is sick and produces a current medical certificate before the end of the maternity leave period.
- 12.3 If the employee decides during maternity leave that they do not wish to return to work, they should give written notice of resignation to the organisation as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of their contract of employment.

13.0 POLICY REVIEW

- 13.1 This Policy will be reviewed 3 years from date of approval, or earlier if legislative or other changes require it.