

MATERNITY POLICY

Aspire Scientific is committed to supporting employees in making choices when planning for the birth of their child. This document sets out our policy on maternity leave and pay.

This policy does not form part of the employment contract and it may be amended at any time. If you have any questions or concerns relating to this policy, please speak to your line manager or to the HR & Operations Manager.

The following phrases and abbreviations are used in this policy:

Expected week of childbirth	The week, starting on a Sunday, in which your doctor or midwife expects you to give birth
Qualifying Week	The 15 th week before the expected week of childbirth
MAT B1	A certificate issued by a doctor or midwife showing the expected date of your baby's birth
SMP	Statutory maternity pay

Maternity leave

All female employees, regardless of their length of service, are entitled to take up to one year of maternity leave (52 weeks). This is not pro-rated for part-time employees. The minimum length of time you must take immediately after giving birth is 2 weeks.

Maternity leave is split into 26 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave.

Maternity pay

Aspire Scientific has introduced an enhanced maternity package which exceeds the statutory provision, and which is available to all eligible employees. We also offer statutory maternity leave and pay for those employees who choose not to receive the enhanced maternity package offered by the Company.

Employees who have not been employed by the Company for long enough to qualify for SMP or for the enhanced maternity package may qualify for maternity allowance. At the Company's discretion, those who have not been employed long enough to qualify for SMP may receive the enhanced portion of the Company's maternity package (minus the value of SMP) in addition to maternity allowance.

The table below sets out the different schemes available to pregnant employees, depending on length of service.

Scheme	Length of continuous service required	Maternity package	Length of time back at work required to avoid repayment of enhanced portion of maternity pay
Enhanced maternity package	>26 weeks prior to the end of the qualifying week (i.e. when 25 weeks pregnant, must have worked for the Company for >26 weeks)	8 weeks at 100% salary (including SMP, not in addition to) 8 weeks at 50% salary (including SMP, not in addition to) 23 weeks SMP 13 weeks unpaid	12 months
SMP	>26 weeks prior to the end of the qualifying week (i.e. when 25 weeks pregnant, must have worked for the Company for >26 weeks)	6 weeks at 90% salary 33 weeks SMP 13 weeks unpaid	No repayment required
Enhanced maternity package for very new employees*	≤26 weeks prior to the end of the qualifying week (i.e. when 25 weeks pregnant, has not worked for the Company for >26 weeks)	As for the standard enhanced maternity package, but minus SMP Employees with ≤26 weeks service prior to the end of the qualifying week may also qualify for maternity allowance (https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance)	12 months
Maternity allowance	≤26 weeks prior to the end of the qualifying week (i.e. when 25 weeks pregnant, has not worked for the Company for >26 weeks)	Employees with ≤26 weeks service prior to the end of the qualifying week may qualify for maternity allowance (https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance)	No repayment required

*At the Company's discretion

Pension contributions

During the first 39 weeks of maternity leave (Ordinary Maternity Leave and the paid portion of Additional Maternity Leave), pension contributions will continue to be made. Your pension contributions will be based on the amount of actual pay you are receiving, while the Company's contributions will be based on the salary you would have received had you not gone on maternity leave. You may wish to increase your own contributions to make up any shortfall while you are in receipt of less than your usual salary. You may also decrease your own contributions, providing that the total contribution (employer + employee) meets the minimum legal limit. Currently, the

minimum total contribution is 8% which is lower than Aspire's contribution if you are opted in to our pension scheme (10%). This means that you do not need to contribute to your pension if you choose not to.

During the period of unpaid Additional Maternity Leave (weeks 40 to 52), you may continue to make pension contributions should you wish, however the Company will not make contributions during this time. In this period, the minimum total contribution to your pension scheme does not apply so you do not need to contribute to your pension if you choose not to.

Bonus payments and pay increases

You will receive any Company-wide bonus payments that you are eligible for and that are issued by the Company during your period of maternity leave. Bonus payments that are paid as a percentage of salary will be based on the salary you would have received had you not gone on maternity leave.

You will continue to receive normal pay increases while you are on maternity leave, as determined by the Company.

Other benefits

Throughout your maternity leave, you will be entitled to all your non-pay related contractual benefits.

Annual leave

Annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue as normal during maternity leave. Accrued annual leave may be used at the end of a period of maternity leave, in lieu of unpaid maternity leave.

Time off for ante-natal care

Once you have advised the Company that you are pregnant, you are entitled to take reasonable paid time off work to attend ante-natal appointments as advised by your doctor, registered midwife, or registered health visitor. Ante-natal care may include relaxation and parent craft classes that your doctor, midwife or health visitor has advised you to attend, in addition to medical examinations.

You should endeavour to give your line manager as much notice as possible of ante-natal appointments.

IVF

If you undergo IVF treatment, you will be entitled to paid time off for ante-natal care after the fertilised embryo has been implanted. From that point onwards, all maternity entitlements are the same. Please also refer to the Fertility Policy.

Notification of pregnancy

You should notify your line manager of your pregnancy as soon as you feel able to do so. In this way, the Company is able to support you and ensure that your working environment is safe. It also enables the Company to put in place arrangements for you relating to your maternity leave.

By the end of the Qualifying Week, or as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards, you should provide the following information in writing to the Company:

- That you are pregnant;
- Your expected week of childbirth;
- The date on which you intend to start your maternity leave.

You must also provide your line manager with a MAT B1 form.

You can bring forward your maternity leave start date, however you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable, preferably at least 28 days before the new start date. You may also postpone your maternity leave start date. Please let your line manager know as soon as reasonably practicable if you wish to do this.

The Company will respond in writing to notification of your leave plans within 28 days, confirming the date on which you are expected to return to work if you take your full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave.

Health and safety

We have a duty to assess any risks that may affect you at work during your pregnancy and will therefore carry out a risk assessment when we have been informed of your pregnancy. We will provide you with information as to any risks identified in any risk assessment and will look at ways in which we can minimise the risk.

Starting maternity leave

You may start your maternity leave at any time between the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth and the actual date of birth. If you give birth before your maternity leave is due to start, you should inform your line manager as soon as reasonably practicable of the date of birth. In these circumstances, your period of maternity leave will start on the day after the date of birth.

If you are absent from work during your pregnancy due to sickness, you will receive sick pay in the same manner as any other sickness absence provided that you have not yet begun maternity leave. If, however, you are absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness after the beginning of the fourth week before the expected week of childbirth but before the date you have notified, or before you have notified a date on which you intend to commence your maternity leave, your maternity leave will usually start automatically on the day after the first day of your absence.

Your period of maternity leave will be considered as continuous service with the Company.

Contact during maternity leave

Shortly before your maternity leave starts, the Company will discuss the arrangements for you to keep in touch during your leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work, or simply to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Keeping in touch days

On agreement with your line manager, you may work up to a maximum of 10 days during your maternity leave period without bringing the period of your maternity leave to an end and without loss of maternity pay. These days are known as 'keeping in touch' (KIT) days. These days may be taken at any stage during maternity leave, except within the first 2 weeks after the date of birth. You are not required to undertake KIT days and the Company is not obliged to agree to them. Should you

undertake a KIT day, you will receive the normal daily/hourly rate for the hours worked, inclusive of any maternity pay you are currently receiving (i.e., maternity pay will be 'topped up' by salary to the level of normal pay). KIT days can be used to attend training courses, team or Company meetings, or appraisals and are not necessarily restricted to the performance of your normal duties.

KIT days do not extend the period of your maternity leave. Once you have worked 10 KIT days, you will lose a week's SMP for any additional week in which you agree to work for the Company.

Shared parental leave

Apart from the first 2 weeks after childbirth, maternity leave may be converted into shared parental leave which can be shared between both parents to allow either or both to care for their child during the first year. Please speak to the HR & Operations Manager if you are interested in shared parental leave. Further information about Shared Parental Leave can be found at www.gov.uk.

Returning to work after maternity leave

Before you go on maternity leave, you will be advised in writing of the date on which you are expected to return to work if you take your full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave. If you intend to return to work before this date, please give as much notice as is reasonably practical and preferably at least 8 weeks. While you are under no obligation to do so, it would assist the Company if you could confirm as soon as convenient during your maternity leave that you will be returning to work as expected.

If you decide not to return to work after maternity leave, you must give notice of resignation as soon as possible and in accordance with the terms of your contract of employment. If the notice period would expire after your maternity leave has ended, the Company may require you to return to work for the remainder of your notice period. If you have received enhanced maternity pay, the Company will reclaim the whole of the enhanced portion of maternity pay unless you return to work for at least 12 months after your maternity leave ends. If you resign during your maternity leave, you will continue to receive SMP or maternity allowance.

If you are unable to attend work at the end of your maternity leave due to sickness or injury, the Company's normal arrangements for sickness absence will apply. In any other case, late return without prior authorisation will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Prior to your return to work after maternity leave, requests for part-time or other flexible working arrangements will be considered in line with the operational requirements of the Company. If you would like this option to be considered, you should discuss with your line manager as soon as possible in advance of your return date.

Additional information

Your entitlement to maternity leave and pay will remain the same irrespective of the number of children born as a result of the same pregnancy.

Employees will remain eligible for maternity leave and pay if their baby is stillborn after the start of the 24th week of pregnancy, or if their baby dies after being born.

Neonatal Care Leave

Neonatal care leave is available to support parents when a baby has received neonatal care in hospital within 28 days of birth, often for a prolonged period. This can be a difficult time for parents, and neonatal care leave provides a way for parents to be able to spend more time with their child during this time. Neonatal care leave is available from day one of employment, and it is available to parents of a child born on or after 6 April 2025.

You may be entitled to up to 12 weeks' neonatal care leave and pay if you are taking the leave to care for the baby and:

- you are the child's parent, intended parent (and will be responsible for their care), or partner of the child's mother at the date of birth; or
- you are the child's adopter, prospective adopter, or partner of either at the date of placement, and you have official notification confirming you are allowed to adopt (if you're adopting a baby from overseas); or
- please note that the 'partner' cannot be the other parent's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

Neonatal care leave of up to 12 weeks can be taken in addition to maternity leave. Neonatal care leave provides one week of leave for every 7 full and continuous days a baby is in neonatal care, for up to 12 weeks. The minimum period of neonatal care leave is one week, and the maximum period of neonatal care leave is 12 weeks.

Neonatal care leave cannot be taken at the same time as other statutory leave such as maternity leave, therefore neonatal care leave can be taken after maternity leave is finished. Leave must be taken in a single continuous block and must be taken within 68 weeks (just under 16 months) of the baby's birth date.

In the event of multiple births (e.g., twins):

- If babies are in neonatal care at the same time, leave can only be claimed for one of them.
- If babies are in neonatal care at separate times, leave can be claimed for each of them up to a maximum of 12 weeks in total.

Neonatal Care Pay

Neonatal care leave is paid at the statutory rate, for those who qualify. To qualify for statutory neonatal care pay, you are required to have:

- At least 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the relevant week (the relevant week is the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth);
- Continued to be employed up to the week before the pay starts;
- Earn on average £125 per week (before tax) or more, over an 8-week period [note: figure quoted is for year 2025-2026].

Notice

Notice should be given to the Company as soon as reasonably possible if neonatal care leave or pay are required. Notice may be given verbally, via email or Teams message to the line manager or HR & Operations Manager, and should state the day that the neonatal care leave is to begin, and whether neonatal care pay is being requested. Line managers receiving such notice must inform the HR &

Operations Manager immediately on receipt of notice.

For more information, please refer to the government website: [Neonatal Care Pay and Leave: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

Aspire Scientific HR

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