

WEST MIDLANDS



PENSION FUND

West Midlands Pension Fund

Going on maternity leave



This maternity leave leaflet sets out the employee's rights throughout their maternity, before, during and after childbirth. Important aspects addressed include the right to the leave itself, the right to statutory maternity pay (SMP), the right to keep in touch, the right to return to work and notice periods.



Contributions during maternity leave

During your period of paid maternity leave, you will be required to pay contributions on the statutory maternity pay (SMP) you receive, and on the occupational maternity pay (OMP), you are entitled to receive irrespective of whether you actually receive payment.

The benefit to you is so that your period of paid maternity leave will count in full and will be treated as if contributions had been paid on your normal pay (ie, you are given the full period of membership in the Scheme for a lower contribution and your future benefits will be calculated on your normal pay).

Contributions during adoption or paternity leave

During your period of paid paternity leave or adoption leave (including any period when only statutory adoption pay is paid), any unpaid adoption leave during the 26-week ordinary adoption/paternity leave period, your LGPS benefits will continue to build up as if you were working normally on full pay. You must continue to pay pension contributions on the actual pay, if any, you are receiving. However, any period of unpaid adoption leave beyond the 26-week period will not count for pension purposes unless you have a right to return to work, in which case you can choose to pay back pension contributions for the unpaid period to make it count.





Period(s) of maternity pay

A period of maternity leave is any period throughout which you are absent from work due to pregnancy or confinement and during which you may exercise the right under your contract of employment to return to work.

Opting-out

If you don't want to pay contributions during your period of maternity leave you have the right to 'opt-out' of the Scheme at any time. However, for the time you remain out of the LGPS, the benefits payable on death will be affected and you will not accrue any pension rights.

The 'no pay' period

You will be given the option to pay contributions for the 'no pay' period. Contributions will be based on the pay that you were entitled to receive immediately before the 'no pay' period begins. Again, this period will count in full as explained above if contributions are paid.

If you wish to pay contributions for the 'no pay' period you must notify your employer, in writing, within 30 days beginning with the earlier of:

- i) your return to work, and**
- ii) the date of ceasing employment.**

If you decide not to pay for the 'no pay' period your Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) record will show a break in membership.

Calculation of maternity pay

The chart below shows the normal periods of paid and unpaid maternity leave. You are advised to confirm maternity provisions with your employer.

0-6 weeks	90% of your normal pay
7-18 weeks	50% of your normal pay (OMP) + SMP
19-39 weeks	SMP only - lower of 50% average weekly earnings or £123.00 per week (2009/10 figures)
40-52 weeks	No pay

NB: If you decide not to receive the half rate OMP (eg, because you are unsure if you will return to work) contributions will still be payable on the SMP amount only for weeks 19 to 39, ie, your employer will make arrangements to recover the appropriate contributions.



Costs and benefits

Generally speaking, it is worth you paying contributions for the 'no pay' period. This is because your employer will also make a contribution when you pay for any period of unpaid maternity leave. The following examples show the approximate costs involved and the estimated retirement benefits for the period of maternity leave:

Example: Paying for the 'no pay' period

Normal pay = £13,000.

Statutory maternity pay (SMP) = £123.00 per week (2009 figures - week 7 to 29 pay lower of £123.00 per week or 50% average weekly earnings). On returning to work, the employee notifies their employer, within 30 days, of their decision to pay for the 'no pay' period.

Pay entitlement	Contributions payable
(immediately before the 'no pay' period)	5.8% at 1 April 2009 on pay between £12,601 – £14,700
13 weeks (no pay period) @ SMP only 13 x (£123.00 SMP ONLY) = £1,599	£92.74 (average contributions only £7.13 per week before tax relief)

After paying for 'no pay' period

Pension: $\frac{1}{60} \times \frac{13 \text{ weeks}}{52 \text{ weeks}} \times £13,000 = £54.17$ per annum

As you can see from this example, the total contributions for the 'no pay' period would have been recovered in less than two years of your annual pension being paid.

Estimate of benefits (after paying for the 'no pay' period)

Pensionable pay = £13,000
(NB: the benefits shown will increase in line with future pay rises.)



Keeping in touch days

If you work on a 'keeping in touch (KIT) day' during your ordinary maternity leave period, both you and your employer will pay contributions based on the pay you receive for that day. If this is in an additional maternity leave (AML) period, both you and your employer will pay contributions based on the pay you received for that day. This day will count as a day of Scheme membership and, if it falls in a period of what would otherwise have been unpaid leave, your employer will notify the Fund of the fact that the day will count as a day's membership. Where an employee wishes to pay contributions for the unpaid period of AML for the pay received for working on a KIT day is disregarded for the purposes of determining the amount of pay on which to base the contributions.

Additional contributions

If you are contributing towards additional voluntary contributions (AVCs), additional regular contributions (ARCs) or purchasing an additional period of membership then, for the whole of your AML period you will continue to make additional payments, unless you opt to stop paying. If your additional payments are being made towards purchasing an additional period of membership, the contributions will be based on the pay you would have received but for being on leave.

If you opt to stop paying ARCs or purchasing extra membership, you will only be credited with the proportion of extra pension or additional membership you have paid for. The contributions for additional membership cannot subsequently resume and, although ARCs can recommence, they would have to be taken out under a new contract which, as you would be likely to be older than when you took out the original ARC contract, it would be calculated using a higher contribution factor.

The current pension contributions rates can be found in our *All About Your Scheme* booklet.



Information produced by the Fund can be made available in several formats including large sight text, Braille and several community languages. If you have any special requirements or would like to speak face to face with a member of staff, please contact us to arrange how we may best meet your needs.

Please remember that special requirements may take a little longer than normal to organise, but you have our assurance that we will do our best to ensure you receive the information in the most appropriate and efficient manner possible.

Data Protection

To protect any personal information held on computer, Wolverhampton City Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. This allows members to check that their details held are accurate. The Fund may, if it chooses, pass certain details to a third party, if the third party is carrying out an administrative function of the Fund, for example, the Fund's AVC provider. Members who wish to apply to access their data on Data Protection Act grounds should contact the City Council's Data Protection Officer on (01902) 554498, via e-mail at dataprotection@wolverhampton.gov.uk

This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use information for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.



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Contact information

Email us on:
PensionFundEnquiries@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Telephone our Helpdesk on:
0300 111 1665

Visit our website at:
wmpfonline.com

Fax us on:
0845 230 1565

Minicom/Typetalk:
01902 554607

Write to us at:
West Midlands Pension Fund
PO Box 3948
Wolverhampton
WV1 1XP

Send us a text on:
Text WMPF + your message
to 60066
Standard short code network charges apply

Lines are open during the
following times:
8:30am to 5.00pm Monday-Thursday
8:30am to 4.30pm Friday

Calls may be monitored for
training purposes

Help and information

Further information

We will ensure that all of our members are provided with relevant further information on request.

Comments and complaints

We welcome and value your comments on the standards of service we provide. If you have any comments you wish to make please contact us at the address shown at the top of the page.

We would also like to hear from you if you are not satisfied with the way you have been treated. If you wish, you can

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speak to Brian Bailey, Director of Pensions, on his personal number (01902) 552020 on any weekday between 9.00 and 9.30am or via email: brian.bailey@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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If you wish to make a formal complaint, you can write to:

Complaints and Compliments
Office of the Chief Executive
Civic Centre
St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1NX