

Discrimination

By law (Equality Act 2010), you must not discriminate against someone you employ, or are considering employing, because of:

- their pregnancy
- an illness related to their pregnancy, including related time off
- maternity pay or leave they take, or plan to take

The law applies regardless of how long the person has been employed.

It applies to:

- anyone [legally classed as an employee or worker](#)
- some self-employed people, if the person has to do the work personally (this is a complex area so [get legal advice](#) if it affects you)

The person could make a claim to an employment tribunal if they believe they've been discriminated against because of pregnancy and maternity.

Discrimination could include:

- [dismissing them](#)
- not offering them a job
- changing their pay or other terms
- forcing them to work while on maternity leave
- stopping them returning to work because they're breastfeeding

The law covers the person during the 'protected period'. This is the period of time from the point they become pregnant until either:

- their maternity leave ends
- they return to work
- they leave their job

Treating someone unfavourably outside the protected period might still be discrimination, if it's connected to their pregnancy or maternity.

If you do dismiss someone while they're pregnant or on maternity leave, you must give them the reasons in writing.

[Find out more about discrimination at work](#)