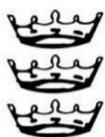


# **Diocese of Bristol Maternity & Adoption Policy for Clergy**

December 2024



**Diocese of Bristol**  
Transforming Church. Together.

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## Version History

Version	Authored by	Date	Approved by
1.0	Anne-Marie Tuck	Sept 2024	
Revision	Amended by	Date	Approved by
1.1	Anne-Marie Tuck	Dec 2024	Alice Kemp

# 1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol recognises and respects the rights of expectant mothers and adoptive parents to take time away from their ministry in connection with pregnancy and childbirth or adoption. Parents will not be negatively affected for exercising their right to take maternity or adoption leave, or for seeking to do so. This is a statement of policy and does not form part of clergy Statement of Particulars.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that as a clergy office holder you are well informed about your entitlement to leave and pay associated with maternity and adoption. This document sets out the process of arranging your leave, and the terms that apply during and after your leave.

## 1.1 A supportive policy

The Diocese of Bristol wants all those whom God has called to positions of authorised ministry to be able to have confidence that the Church will support them properly and enable them to continue in ministry as they become parents.

We recognise that as contributors to church life, to ministry and to society, female clergy have something unique to bring. Women are more vulnerable during pregnancy and motherhood because of the immense demands on them. As a result, civil society has recognised that specific provision needs to be made for them, and that this provision is legitimate and a social 'good' that all benefit from. We want the Church to be at least as caring and supportive of families, as secular workplaces. (*Wording adapted from Clergy Babies, 2024 – link in appendix*).

However, we recognise that families can be made in different ways, and we want our [parental leave policies](#) to support all parents as much as possible regardless of gender, sexual orientation or how a child joins the family. We want to ensure all parents, and those hoping to become parents, feel supported.

## **1.2 Our use of Gendered Language**

We recognise that the specific language of “maternity” in this policy has defaulted to discussing women as the ones taking maternity leave. We want to affirm and acknowledge that non-binary and trans clergy who carry children will be affected by similar issues and may face further discrimination due to their gender identity. Adoption is by nature gender neutral.

## **1.3 Who is covered by this policy?**

This policy applies to all stipendiary office holders both full-time and part-time including those in curacies and Archdeacons.

This policy also includes information applicable to Self-Supporting Ministers (SSM) and Ordinands. Whilst SSMs and ordinands are entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave regardless of their length of service, the remuneration of their Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or Maternity Allowance will be directly from the UK Government. The Diocesan Human Resources (HR) team will ensure that individuals will have support in claiming what they are entitled to.

This policy does not apply to clergy employees who have the same statutory rights to pay and leave as other employees, and whose entitlement to enhanced pay during any period of Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave will be determined by their employment contract.

If this policy is used by clergy in Cathedral, please consult/ refer to the Dean where the policy suggests Archdeacons are contacted.

## 2. Your pregnancy

### 2.1 I am pregnant. What do I need to do?

When you first find out you are pregnant, you do not need to tell anyone immediately. If you would like some confidential support, please approach:

- Dean of Women's Ministry - **Canon Alice Kemp**  
[alice.kemp@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:alice.kemp@bristoldiocese.org)
- Adviser for Clergy Wellbeing - **Revd Jordan Ling**  
[jordan.ling@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:jordan.ling@bristoldiocese.org) (Sept 2024)

The Human Resources (HR) team can also support you as you navigate the maternity processes. For informal confidential support with any questions email the HR team at [humanresources@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:humanresources@bristoldiocese.org)

### 2.2 Who do I need to tell and when?

Informing the HR team, and your Archdeacon of your pregnancy (with approximate dates) as early as possible can be beneficial. However, we recognise that not everyone is ready to share their news in the same timescale. HR need to know 4 weeks before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

When you let HR know, it will help to ensure you receive all the benefits you are entitled to and start the process of working out what cover is needed in your parish role. We will also help you to carry out a Maternity Risk Assessment (see Section 2.5 on Health and Safety).

### 2.3 What formal paperwork is there?

Your GP or Midwife should issue a Maternity Certificate (MAT B1 form) for you at around 26 weeks pregnant. Please send your MAT B1 to the HR team as soon as you are given it.

We will need your certificate 6 weeks before the start of your leave to allow the Diocese HR Team to give notice to the HRMC.

You will also need to tell HR the date when you plan to start your maternity leave and how long you would like your leave to last. You can amend these details at a later stage, but we do need to know when you are planning to start your leave (See section 8.33 for application forms).

## 2.4 What about my antenatal appointments?

Everyone has the right to reasonable time-off for antenatal care regardless of the length of service or the number of hours worked. If you are in receipt of a Stipend, this will be paid time-off.

As well as medical appointments, we understand that you may need time off for other appointments you are encouraged to attend by your medical practitioner, such as relaxation and parent-craft classes.

Where such appointments conflict with your parish duties, please give sufficient notice to the Archdeacon/DDO and/or plan for suitable cover.

## 2.5 Health and Safety considerations whilst pregnant

Whilst clergy are office holders, not employees, we seek to uphold the requirements and best practice for the health and safety of pregnant women as described in [Workplace Safety Law](#). We strongly encourage you to take responsibility for familiarising yourself with the documents.

The Diocese through the HR Manager and the Archdeacon can help you to complete a Maternity Risk Assessment (appendix 8.22) to consider the risks you may be exposed to in the course of your duties.

You have a responsibility to identify any areas of work which might adversely affect your health and safety. Please raise any concerns with your Archdeacon or Diocesan HR manager so we can identify a suitable course of action. Where appropriate, adjustments will be agreed.

Where a risk cannot be avoided, a discussion should take place about what measures can be taken to mitigate the risks and offer alternative activities. In exceptional cases where suitable alternative work cannot be found, you will continue to receive your stipend whilst not working.

## 2.6 Pregnancy Related Sickness

From the point of view of parish responsibilities, pregnancy-related sickness will be treated as any other period of ill-health. However, during the 4 weeks immediately before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), any sickness absence will normally automatically trigger the start of maternity leave.

## 3. Adopting a child

We recognise that the adoption process can be long and indirect. We celebrate with you as the day approaches when you will become an adoptive parent. You may of course have shared your progress with friends and colleagues already. If you would like some confidential support please approach the Dean of Women's Ministry, or the Adviser for Clergy Wellbeing:

- Dean of Women's Ministry - **Canon Alice Kemp**  
[alice.kemp@bristoldioocese.org](mailto:alice.kemp@bristoldioocese.org)
- Adviser for Clergy Wellbeing - **Revd Jordan Ling**  
[jordan.ling@bristoldioocese.org](mailto:jordan.ling@bristoldioocese.org) (Dec 2024)

The HR team can also support you as you navigate the adoption leave processes. For informal confidential support with any questions email the HR team at [humanresources@bristoldioocese.org](mailto:humanresources@bristoldioocese.org).

### 3.1 What formal paperwork do I need to do if I'm adopting?

When you have been matched and are ready for HR to know about your adoption, please let us know the approximate timescales, and plans.

When you are able to, please send your [proof of adoption](#) to our diocesan HR team. Within 7 days of being matched with a child you must tell us:

- how much leave you want to take.
- your leave start date.
- the 'date of placement' i.e. the date the child is placed with you.

We are legally required to confirm your leave start and end dates within 28 days.

For the HR team receiving your paperwork as early as possible will help us to ensure you get the best support and all benefits that you are due.

A minimum of 2 weeks must be taken as Adoption leave, by the primary adopter, immediately after the placement of the child.

#### 3.1.1 I need to change my dates.

You must tell us within 28 days if the date of placement (or UK arrival date for overseas adoptions) changes.

## 4. Your Maternity or Adoption Leave

Under the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Directions 2010, office holders are entitled to maternity and adoption leave and shared parental leave for the same periods and subject to the same conditions as apply in the case of an employee under the Employment Rights Act 1996, or any regulations made under that Act that have effect at the time when the Directions came into force on 1 January 2011.

### 4.1 Your home

The holding of office is distinct from employment in a number of ways that affect the consideration of your entitlements as an office holder. As an office holder you remain in office while you are on maternity/adoption leave – which means you retain the rights and responsibilities that go with the office. This includes the right to remain in your home **where** accommodation **has been** provided for the better performance of your duties.

### 4.2 Covering your duties

We want you to be able to take leave from work knowing that your parish (or other context) will be well served in your absence, and that you have clear boundaries in place ready for your leave.

As with other types of leave, you are expected to find cover. Clause 2 (2) of the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Directions confers a requirement on you.

*'In consultation with a responsible person or authority' to 'use all reasonable endeavours to make arrangements for the duties of the office to be performed by another person or persons during your period of leave.'*

However, the Diocese does not want you to feel the burden of finding cover is solely reliant on you, so this process will start with a discussion with the Area Dean (or incumbent if you are a curate/ ordinand) and the Archdeacon about how best to ensure that cover is provided whilst you are on leave. The Diocese will then work with you to:

- Make arrangements in advance to cover services during your Maternity /Adoption Leave and delegating other duties to church wardens,
- OR
- Arrange for an appointment under Regulation 29, which allows for someone to be appointed to a post designated as created in order to cover your Maternity/Adoption Leave. This may be held for a fixed term or under terms which provide for the appointment to be terminated on the occurrence of a specified event, such as your return from Leave.

#### 4.2.1 Discussing your leave with the PCC

We support the best practice as stated in the Church of England Family Friendly Guidance ([Guidance note cl.28](#)). So, recommend that your Archdeacon meets to discuss with you and the Parochial Church Council (or other relevant body) to discuss the support you are likely to need and to help the congregation understand that parenthood might result in changes to clergy availability, both during maternity /adoption leave and afterwards.

#### 4.2.2 Paid cover for incumbents

The Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) will finance paid cover for those holding the office of Incumbent during their maternity/adoption leave up to and including **two services per week, other occasional offices, and all essential meetings** for up to 12 months.

#### 4.2.3 Cover for Self-supporting Ministers

If you are an SSM, do not hold incumbent status and need assistance with cover while on Maternity Leave and when returning from leave, you should discuss this with the Incumbent and Archdeacon.

#### 4.2.4 Time off for Ordinands

As an ordinand you will most likely pause your studies during maternity or adoption leave. This will require discussion with your Diocesan

Director of Ordinands (DDO) and the Theological Education Institution (TEI). What is best for you and your family will be considered. It depends on the time of year but is often the case that Ordinands take 52 weeks maternity leave, so you can restart your formational training at the same point in the year. Ordinands are not usually eligible for maternity pay and adoption pay, but a maternity allowance can be applied for. See Section 4.6.4)

### **4.3 Maternity Leave (time off paid and unpaid)**

#### **4.3.1 How much maternity leave can I take?**

Everyone is entitled to take up to 52 weeks maternity leave, regardless of their role, length of service and hours worked.

Maternity leave is made up of two parts:

- OML – Ordinary (paid) Maternity Leave (39 weeks)
- AML - Additional (and unpaid) Maternity Leave (13 weeks)

UK law states that you may not work for two weeks immediately after the birth of a baby.

[The UK government website has a Maternity Planner which can help you work out when you may wish to take leave.](#)

#### **4.3.2 Starting your maternity leave**

Your maternity leave (and any pay you will be owed) can start on any day of the week but no earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). However, if you give birth before the start of your planned maternity leave, then your maternity leave/pay will start the day after the birth.

If your baby arrives before you planned to finish work and start maternity leave, please let us know as soon as reasonably practicable.

Please can you (or someone acting on your behalf) contact the HR team on [humanresources@bristoldioocese.org](mailto:humanresources@bristoldioocese.org). The HR team will then write to you to confirm the revised date for your return.

### 4.3.3 Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

UK law states that [Statutory Maternity Pay](#) is payable to eligible expectant mothers to help them take time off work around the time of birth.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. You get:

- 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
- £184.03 (Sept 2024) or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

If SMP is likely to be more than your stipend e.g. due to a part time work agreement, you will receive SMP up to the value of your stipend. Please see section 4.6.1 (Maternity) and 4.6.2 (adoption) about eligibility for enhanced pay during Maternity/ Adoption Leave.

### 4.3.4 Diocese of Bristol Enhanced Maternity Pay

If you are in receipt of a Stipend and it is more than the value of the Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), then in addition to SMP the Diocese of Bristol will provide a “top up.” This is called Enhanced Maternity Pay and will mean that stipendiary office holders continue to receive the value of their usual stipend (whether full or part time) for the first 39 weeks of maternity leave.

The Church Commissioners will claim back for the 39 weeks of SMP while you receive your full stipend, you do not need to apply for this.

After your 39 weeks of maternity leave, you are also entitled to an additional 13 weeks of unpaid leave.

## 4.4 Your Adoption leave

### 4.4.1 How much adoption leave can I take?

Everyone is entitled to take up to 52 weeks adoption leave, regardless of their length of service and hours worked.

Statutory Adoption Leave is 52 weeks. It is made up of:

- 26 weeks of Ordinary Adoption Leave
- 26 weeks of Additional Adoption Leave

Only 1 person in a couple can take adoption leave. The other partner could get [paternity leave](#) instead.

If you get adoption leave, you can also get paid time off work to attend 5 adoption appointments after you have been matched with a child.

#### 4.4.2 Starting your Adoption Leave

Adoption leave can start:

- up to 14 days before the date the child starts living with you (UK adoptions)
- when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)
- the day the child's born or the day after (if you have used a surrogate to have a child).

[The UK government website has an Adoption Leave Planner which can help you work out when you should take leave.](#)

#### 4.4.3 Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

UK law states that [Statutory Adoption Pay](#) is payable to eligible adopters to help them take time off work when the child joins their family.

Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. You get:

- 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
- £184.03 (Sept 2024) or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

If SAP is likely to be more than your stipend e.g. due to a part time work agreement, you will receive SMP up to the value of your stipend. Please see section 4.4.4 about eligibility for enhanced pay during Maternity/ Adoption Leave.

#### 4.4.4 Diocese of Bristol Enhanced Maternity/Adoption Pay

If you are in receipt of a Stipend and it is more than the value of the Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), then in addition to SAP the Diocese of

Bristol will provide a “top up.” This is called Enhanced Adoption Pay and will mean that stipendiary office holders continue to receive the value of their usual stipend (whether full or part time) for the first 39 weeks of adoption leave.

The Church Commissioners will claim back for the 39 weeks of SAP while you receive your full stipend, you do not need to apply for this.

After your 39 weeks of adoption leave, you are also entitled to an additional 13 weeks of unpaid leave.

## **4.5 Tax and Pension**

### **4.5.1 Income Tax and National Insurance**

SMP or SAP is paid in the same way as your stipend. Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.

### **4.5.2 Pension**

The Clergy Pension Scheme ensures that your contributions will be made during paid maternity /adoption leave absence (up to 39 weeks). If on your return to work you wish to pay contributions for the unpaid part of your maternity/adoption leave (up to 13 weeks), please contact the Clergy Pensions Team.

## **4.6 Eligibility for paid leave: length of service**

### **4.6.1 Eligibility: length of service and maternity pay**

You are [eligible](#) for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if you are a stipendiary office holder and:

- In your post by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due (qualifying week) and where:
  - You have completed at least 26 weeks continuous service in that post by the qualifying week. **See** section 4.6.13.
  - You have given correct notice to the Diocese of Bristol
  - Your average stipend is more than £123 a week (Sept 2024)

- You are still pregnant at the 11th week before their baby is due or have had your baby by that time.

#### 4.6.2 Eligibility: length of service and adoption pay

You are [eligible](#) for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) if you are a stipendiary office holder and:

- You have completed at least 26 weeks continuous service in that post by the week you were matched with a child.
- Your average stipend is more than £123 a week (Sept 2024)
- You have given correct notice to the Diocese of Bristol
- You have provided proof of the adoption.

Specific conditions also apply in the case of surrogacy and adopting a child from abroad in line with [UK Government Guidance](#).

#### 4.6.3 Length of service exceptions

If, as a stipendiary office holder, you have been in your role for less than 26 weeks at your “qualifying week” (maternity) or “match week” (adoption) you may not be entitled to Government issued Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay (SMP/SAP).

However, the Diocese of Bristol seeks to be as fair as possible; if you have been an office holder elsewhere within the Church of England or have been in formation/training for ordination during the qualifying 26 weeks, then this would still be considered as continuous service.

If you have left the Church Commissioner’s payroll to undertake a role outside of the church, you may not be eligible. However, a discussion with the relevant Archdeacon may conclude a previous role qualifies as continued ministry through this time.

If you are not entitled to SMP/SAP we can support you to apply for [maternity allowance](#) or in the case of adoption seek funding from the local authority. In this case the Diocesan finance team will be able to issue you with an [SMP 1 \(maternity\)](#) or [SAP1\(adoption\)](#) form to confirm that that no stipend payment is made from the Diocese.

#### 4.6.4 Non stipendiary individuals

Whilst self-supporting office holders and ordinands are entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave regardless of their length of service, remuneration of their Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance will be directly from the UK Government. If you are adopting and are not eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay, you may be able to receive money from your [local council](#). In either case the Diocesan HR team will ensure that individuals will have support in claiming what they are entitled to.

### 4.7 During your Maternity or Adoption leave

#### 4.7.1 Working during Maternity/Adoption leave

Unlike an employee, as an office holder you do not lose SMP/SAP if you stay in touch with the parish or diocese or carry out some of the duties of your office during your maternity/adoption leave.

Therefore, Keeping in Touch (“KIT”) days are not necessary. You will not lose stipend if you choose to keep in touch with parishioners or the diocese.

However, we advise that you think carefully about what arrangements you would like to make for keeping in touch during any period of leave, as you may wish to set out clear boundaries.

Before you commence your maternity or adoption leave you are encouraged to take time to provide clarity to parishioners about what work (which includes contact with parishioners) you are willing to do during your leave. This is for your own wellbeing.

It will then be important to observe scrupulously any boundaries that you have set, in order to encourage parishioners to respect them. Dependent on your parish setting, it may be helpful for the Churchwardens to be the initial point of contact.

Your Archdeacons, the Clergy Wellbeing and HR teams can support you in this process.

#### **4.7.2 Continuing your ministry in office**

As an office holder you are considered to remain in your office during your maternity/adoption leave (but not to carry out any duties).

Therefore, it is your right to return to work in your existing post unless you resign or are removed from it.

#### **4.7.3 Maternity or Adoption leave during curacy or other time limited posts.**

Under Regulation 29 of Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Regulations 2009, there are several categories where the role is for a fixed term.

Pregnant office holders in such roles have the same rights as those in other roles. More specifically, for those in curacy roles, provided you have met your obligations in terms of notification requirements, appropriate extensions to the training or other arrangements will be agreed by the Adviser for Curacy upon your return from Maternity Leave.

However, when the role ends, the SMP rate will apply for the period between the end-date of the post and the end-date of the paid Maternity Leave.

Within the Diocese of Bristol, training curacies are open for up to 4 years as a default, with most people completing their curacies within 3 years, this already gives time for up to 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave. However please make the Adviser for Curacy or your Archdeacon and/or the HR team aware if you think that extending the curacy will be necessary to take account of the leave, or if you wish to discuss part time other options.

When your pregnancy occurs in the first year of your curacy it is likely to affect the timing of your ordination as a priest. An early conversation with the Adviser for Curacy is recommended to enable the impacts to be best understood and arrangements to be made.

### **4.8 Maternity Leave and Annual Leave**

Your period of absence on maternity or adoption leave will be counted as “service” for the purposes of annual leave. You are advised to take your

annual leave in the current “leave year” before the starting your maternity or adoption leave. Where it is not possible to take the annual leave entitlement before the commencement of the maternity/adoption leave period (e.g. the baby arrives early), then this leave can be taken after the maternity or adoption leave period.

If you decide to return to work within the same “leave year” \* then you may take your annual leave entitlement when you have returned to work.

If you are unsure whether you will be returning to work, we advise that you take only a leave amount based on your anticipated service in the current leave year. If you return to work, you will be entitled to any outstanding leave entitlement due to you in that “leave year.”

[\* “leave year” – if you are unsure when your leave year starts and finishes for the purposes of calculation of maternity/ adoption leave, [please contact HR](#)].

## **4.9 After Maternity Leave**

### **4.9.1 Expected Return Date**

Under current regulations, senior staff will assume that your maternity or adoption leave will end at the dates which were agreed, and you will return to your role.

If you wish to return to work before your official return date, then you must discuss this with the appropriate Archdeacon /Adviser for Curacy/ DDO so that arrangements can be made and advice given.

Where you wish to return to work on a different basis this should be discussed with the Archdeacon.

Ideally please consider giving us at least 8 weeks’ notice if you want to change your return-to-work date, however we recognise that family situations change, and this may not always be possible. Give as much notice as you are able.

Around 4 weeks prior to your return contact Archdeacon about your return.

### **4.9.2 Returning into an altered role**

Where it has been agreed that you may return to work on a different basis, i.e. part-time, the details and implications should be thoroughly explored and agreed with the Archdeacon. This maybe because circumstances dictate that a period of part time working may help share the load of family responsibilities. If it has been agreed that you can take [parental leave](#) or a career break immediately following the expiry of maternity or adoption leave, local arrangements can be discussed with the Archdeacon.

You have the right to return to the clergy role in which you were serving prior to the maternity/adoption leave period. Where it is not practical or advisable for this to happen (only in the most exceptional of circumstance) options and alternatives will be discussed at every stage.

### **4.9.3 Sickness during maternity leave**

If you are unwell during your maternity leave, and this situation is not improving as you approach your return date.

If you had planned to return to work after a period of Unpaid Maternity Leave, it may be better for your official return date to be brought forward so you can switch straight from paid Maternity leave to paid sick leave and rather than unpaid leave. Where this is the case, your Area Dean/Archdeacon/Incumbent will work with you to support you in preparing to return when you are ready – including consideration of a phased return to work. The Diocese will support the Parish in continuing to find cover for services and other duties as in other cases of clergy sickness.

### **4.9.4 Deciding Not to Return**

If you are unsure about returning to your duties, please discuss this with your Archdeacon (or appropriate senior leader) as early as possible. If this leads to a decision not to return after Maternity Leave then you must inform your Archdeacon and the Bishop, stating your decision to resign from your office and giving the appropriate notice period as detailed in the Statement of Particulars.

If the amount of Maternity Leave left to run when notice is given is less than the contractual notice period, you may be required to return to office for the remainder of the notice period. Please note that once you have given notice that you will not be returning to office, if you change your mind, there is no absolute right to return, although, with the agreement of the Bishop, every effort will be made to find an alternative suitable post. This does not affect your right to receive SMP/SAP.

## **5.Paternity Leave**

The Diocese of Bristol Paternity leave policy can be found at:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/churchlife/resourcesforministers/clergyhandbook/.php%20#Family%20friendly%20policies>

## **6.Shared parental leave note only/ link.**

The Diocese of Bristol Paternity leave policy can be found at:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/churchlife/resourcesforministers/clergyhandbook/.php%20#Family%20friendly%20policies>

## **7. Miscarriage and Still Birth**

The death of a baby at any stage of pregnancy can be devastating and is usually completely unexpected and in every case the death of a baby is traumatic. Following the death, parents go home without the baby they love and have prepared for, and they also face the loss of their plans and hopes for the future.

For clergy to return to their office can be incredibly challenging even with the love, support and understanding of their fellow clergy and parishes.

### **7.1 Baby loss up to 24th week of pregnancy**

The grief and shock of losing a baby during early pregnancy can be much the same as following a stillbirth. This can be extremely hard for parents who want their baby and their loss to be officially recognised. For legal purposes, a loss at any stage before 24 completed weeks of pregnancy is called a miscarriage and so the maternity provisions do not apply to miscarriages before the 24th week of pregnancy.

In these unfortunate circumstances, the Diocese of Bristol will give anyone who miscarries before the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy the opportunity to take two weeks leave at full pay. There will be no questions asked, and a sick note is not required, but if you are able to provide evidence (i.e. self-certification of sickness for first 7 days self cert/ GP note thereafter) this will mean that DBF can claim back Statutory Sick Pay.

If further leave is needed then Sick Leave and Sick Pay will be given, provided this is covered by a certificate from a GP. We will record this separately from other Sick Leave to make sure that there is clarity i.e. there is no risk you will be treated unfavourably because of the miscarriage.

If your absence continues for a long time after the miscarriage but you still need time off, we will consider whether it may be helpful to take a period of compassionate leave. Alternatively, you can ask for unpaid leave.

### **7.2 Baby loss after 24th week of pregnancy**

If a baby is stillborn after the twenty fourth week of pregnancy or if the baby is born alive at any point (even if the baby later dies), you would be entitled to full maternity rights.

### **7.3 Support available after the loss of a baby.**

If you experience the loss of a child, through a miscarriage, a still birth or a baby dies after birth, pastoral support is available to all clergy through the Clergy Wellbeing Team, please contact the Adviser for Clergy Wellbeing **Revd Jordan Ling** [jordan.ling@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:jordan.ling@bristoldiocese.org). As well as confidential support, they will help you to access a counselling service which exists to help individuals deal with challenging, emotional issues they face, whether work related or personal, through short-term, professional counselling. The service is entirely confidential. In these circumstances, the diocese will normally meet the full cost of counselling accessed.

As an office holder you usually have enough flexibility to arrange your duties to be able to attend medical appointments, but additional support will be given to help you attend appointments caused by the loss of a child, in agreement your Archdeacon (or other senior leader).

## 8. APPENDICES

### 8.1 Definitions and abbreviations

Additional Adoption Leave (AAL):	This is the second 26-week period and must follow directly on from Ordinary Adoption Leave. The contract of employment continues for this period.
Additional Maternity Leave (AML)	The right to an additional period of Maternity Leave immediately following the end of Ordinary Maternity Leave for a period of a further 26 weeks. There is no qualifying period of employment. AML beyond 39wks is unpaid.
Adopter	The person who is eligible for adoption leave and/or pay as they are legally adopting a child. They can be male or female or non-binary
Compulsory Adoption Leave	A minimum of 2 weeks must be taken as Adoption leave, by the primary adopter, immediately after the placement of the child.
Compulsory Maternity Leave	This is a period of leave imposed by law on all female employees which prohibits a return to work for a period of 2 weeks from the date of childbirth.
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
DoB	Diocese of Bristol
DoWM	Dean of Women's Ministry
Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)	The week in which the childbirth occurs. "Week" means the week beginning with midnight between Saturday and Sunday in which the doctor or midwife expects that the child will be born.
MAT1B	A form the GP/midwife gives to a team member to confirm their pregnancy and when the baby is due.
Match	When an adopter is approved to adopt a named child or children.
Matching Week	The week in which the Adopter is notified of being matched with a child for adoption.

Maternity Allowance (MA)	Payments to be made by the Department for Work and Pensions to female employees taking Maternity Leave who do not qualify for statutory maternity pay.
Maternity Leave	The time off that you take when you have given birth to a baby.
Mother	The person who gives birth to a child
NADAWM	National Association of Diocesan Advisers in Women's Ministry
Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)	Enhanced maternity pay arrangement funded by the employer as an employee benefit. Qualifying periods and restrictions apply.
Office	Your post/ role – as per Statement of Particulars.
Ordinand	Someone currently in preordination formational training.
Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL)	This is the first 26 weeks of maternity leave. The contract of employment continues for this period.
Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	This is the right of all female employees to a period of 26 weeks Maternity Leave regardless of length of service but provided they comply with certain notification requirements. The allowances payable are Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA) and the paid period extends into part of the additional Maternity Leave period.
Partner	The child's biological father or the partner of the mother/adopter. This can be a spouse, civil partner; or a partner who is living with the mother/adopter and the child and has responsibility for the child.
Primary Adopter	The parent who is nominated as the primary care giver when adopting a child.
SAP	Statutory Adoption Pay
SMP	Statutory Maternity Pay
SSM	Self-Supporting Minister

Statutory Maternity Leave	This is a leave entitlement of 52 weeks and is made up of Ordinary Maternity Leave – the first 26 weeks and Additional Maternity Leave – the last 26 weeks.
Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)	Compulsory pay payable to all female employees taking Maternity Leave provided they satisfy certain criteria.

## 8.2 Example Maternity Risk Assessment

	<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	Expectant Mother (Clergy example)		<b>Organisation</b> Diocese of Bristol			<b>Date:</b>	<b>Completed by:</b>				
<b>What are the hazards?</b>	<b>Who might be harmed?</b>	<b>How might people be harmed?</b>	<b>Existing risk control measures</b>	<b>Risk rating*</b>			<b>Additional controls</b>	<b>Risk rating* (residual)</b>			<b>Action /monitored by whom?</b>	<b>Action /monitored by when?</b>
				<b>L</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>		<b>L</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>R</b>		
Physical exertion during services	Expectant mother, unborn baby	Fatigue, strain, or physical injury due to prolonged standing or walking.	Availability of seating during services, planning service to reduce physical duties.	2	3	6	Have suitable seat available if needs to sit during service	1	1	1	Archdeacon/ HR/ Exp. Mother	Every 6 weeks
Exposure to infection during visits or services	Expectant mother, unborn baby	Increased risk of illness	Hand hygiene practices, avoidance of contact with contagious illness	2	3	6	Offer virtual pastoral visits where necessary	2	1	2	Archdeacon/ HR/ Exp. Mother	Every 6 weeks



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## **8.3 CLERGY PARENTAL LEAVE APPLICATION FORMS**

8.3.1 [Parental leave form](#)

8.3.2 [Parental leave form \(online version\)](#)

8.3.3 [Parental leave form instructions](#)

## **8.4 References and further reading**

8.4.1 [DIOCESE OF BRISTOL FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES](#)

8.4.2 [CLERGY BABIES \(resource for some of the text\)](#)

8.4.3 [FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES CofE](#)

8.4.4 [GUIDANCE TO DIOCESE CofE](#)

## 8.5 Frequently Asked Questions for Parishes

### Clergy Maternity & Adoption leave

#### 8.5.1 Our Incumbent Priest is pregnant or soon to adopt a baby what does this mean for our parish?

Your Priest is entitled to maternity or adoption leave, like any other “employed” person. However, they are also entitled to continue to be the “office holder” which means whilst they may be stepping back from their active duties for a while, they can stay in their house, and they remain as your Priest during their leave. As a church and community, it will be important to work well together to ensure that the Clergy family get the space they need, and the Priest is not expected to deal with parish queries whilst they are taking the Maternity /Adoption leave.

#### 8.5.2 Who will lead our Church services while our incumbent is off?

Before your Priest starts their Maternity / Adoption leave, and with support from the Diocese, the Area Dean and incumbent will involve the church wardens and the Parochial Church Council (PCC), to ensure that there are plans in place to provide effective leadership in your incumbent Priest’s absence.

The Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) will finance paid cover for those holding the office of Incumbent during their maternity/adoption leave up to and including **two services per week, other occasional offices, and all essential meetings** for up to 12 months.

#### 8.5.3 Our Assistant Curate or Assistant Minister is pregnant or soon to adopt a baby what does this mean for our parish?

The existing ministry team (incumbent Priest, LLMs and those with Permission to Officiate) will cover for the Curate or Assistant Minister whilst they are on their family leave.

#### 8.5.4 Will our Deacon/ Priest stay in their house?

Yes. If your Clergy person is an “office holder” then they will be welcome to remain in their house.

The holding of office is distinct from employment in a number of ways. As office holders they remain in office while on maternity/adoption leave – which means they retain the rights and responsibilities that go with the office. This includes the right to remain in their home where accommodation has been provided for the better performance of duties.

### **8.5.5 Who will provide our Parish with pastoral care during the Incumbent Priest's absence?**

The expectation would be that Pastoral care will be managed by the church wardens, or someone else from the ministry team may be allocated to take the lead whilst your Priest is not working. The aim is to ensure that as far as possible the parish and congregation's needs continue to be met. Where this is challenging, then the Church Wardens are encouraged to contact the Area Dean to share any concerns and seek support.

### **8.5.6 Will there be a designated contact person for urgent matters?**

Yes. Before the Priest goes on leave you will be advised who the designated contact will be for various issues. This may be the person who is designated to lead services, (see question 8.8.2 above), or may be another individual such as the Area Dean.

### **8.5.7 Will there be a temporary leader while our Priest is on leave?**

Yes. Before the Priest goes on leave, they will advise you of the designated leave during their absence.

### **8.5.8 Are we allowed to contact the Priest/ Deacon while they are taking family leave?**

Please respect the boundaries of the clergy family. Communication should primarily go through the designated contact (see above – usually church warden) for essential matters, as the Priest/ Deacon will be focusing on their family during this time.

### **8.5.9 How can the congregation support the clergy family during this time?**

The congregation is encouraged to offer support through prayer and any other forms of assistance to help the family during this transition.

It may be appropriate to offer practical help e.g. with meals after the baby/child arrives, but this must be done in a coordinated and respectful way with full consent from the clergy family. They have the right to time away from parish life however generous the offers of support.

### **8.5.10 Are the clergy family permitted to attend church run events such as parent and baby group?**

Should they attend during maternity/adoption leave then they will be attending in their capacity as a parent. This means that they cannot be asked to assist with running the group or relied upon e.g. to act as a DBS checked volunteer.

### **8.5.11 Will the Deacon/ Priest still come to church with her baby/family?**

The family may choose to continue to attend church services and events within your parish, and if this is the case, then it is important that you continue to respect their boundaries and do not ask “work” related questions. It may be that they attend another church for a time.

### **8.5.12 How will the congregation be kept informed?**

The church wardens and remainder of the ministry team will ensure that you are kept up to date.

### **8.5.13 Will there be any changes to the schedule of services or events?**

While we would endeavour to maintain the current schedule, there may be adjustments, which will be communicated to the congregation as arrangements are finalised.

### **8.5.14 What is the planned duration of the maternity/adoption leave, and how will the transition back to work be managed?**

The duration of the maternity/adoption leave will follow established guidelines (at least 2 weeks and up to a year). However typically maternity/adoption leave is for around 10 months and can be up to 13 months (including a period of annual leave).

At the point when they are close to reaching their return-to-work date, and the Priest/ Deacon will work with the Diocese to ensure a smooth transition back to their duties.

### **8.5.15 Will the Priest/ Deacon be allowed to have Keeping in Touch (KIT) days whilst on maternity/ adoption leave?**

As office holders rather than employees they will not have formal keeping in touch days but may choose to agree with the Area Dean/ Incumbent and/or church wardens some periods of time during which to catch up on what has been going on in their absence.

### **8.5.16 What will happen if our Priest/ Deacon is unwell at the end of their maternity/ adoption leave?**

If your Priest/Deacon is unwell during their paid period of maternity leave, then they will continue to be paid Maternity pay and there is no requirement for them to submit a Fitnote to cover this time. However, once they reach the

end of this paid Maternity Leave period if they are then unable to return to work due to ill health, they will need to speak to their Area Dean/Archdeacon about this and secure a Fit note.

If they had planned to return to work after a period of Unpaid Maternity leave, it may be that the official return date is brought forward so they can switch straight from paid Maternity leave to paid sick leave and rather than unpaid leave. Where this is the case, the Area Dean/Archdeacon/Incumbent will work with the Priest/Deacon to support them in preparing for a return when they are ready – including consideration of a phased return to work. The Diocese will support the Parish in continuing to find cover for services and other duties as in other cases of clergy sickness.

#### **8.5.17 Will our Priest/ Deacon return full time after their maternity/adoption leave?**

It is possible that your Priest/ Deacon may choose to return to work on a different basis, i.e. part-time, the details and implications will have been thoroughly explored and agreed with the Archdeacon, and provision for ongoing ministry in the parish made accordingly. This maybe because circumstances dictate that a period of part time working may help share the load of family responsibilities.

#### **8.5.18 Will there be a welcome-back event for the Priest/ Deacon on their return?**

Yes, the PCC can organise a welcome-back event to celebrate the Priest/ Deacon's return and help reintegrate them into parish life.