

MATERNITY LEAVE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Policy covers all female employees in the Republic of Ireland who are pregnant whilst in the employment of Irish Nationwide Building Society, and ensures the Society upholds current legislation regarding maternity leave. It reflects the Society's additional provision over and above the **Maternity Leave Protection Acts, 1994, 2005 & 2007**.
- 1.2. *To qualify for the benefits under this policy the procedures and conditions detailed below must be closely followed.*

2. Society Policy

- 2.1. The Society will provide facilities and support for qualifying employees as follows:

Time off

Maternity Leave

- 2.2. All employees covered by the Maternity Acts will receive up to 42 consecutive weeks off work on maternity leave in two phases, i.e.
- 2.2.1. You can avail of 26 weeks maternity leave, however at least two weeks must be taken before the date of birth (the period of confinement) and at least four weeks after the date of birth.
- 2.2.2. You can avail of up to sixteen weeks additional unpaid maternity leave immediately after the first period of time off.

Medical Appointments, Ante Natal and Post Natal care

- 2.3. Employees are entitled to paid time off for medical or related ante-natal or post-natal care related to the pregnancy. The Society requests that where possible, the appointments should be scheduled at the beginning or the end of the working day. If the appointment is scheduled during the working day, the employee must return to work. Employees must give written notification to their manager and the HR Department outlining the date and time of the appointments at least two weeks in advance other than in emergency situations where the HR Department is to be given as much notice as possible.
- 2.4. Fathers can take paid time off to attend, the last two antenatal classes before the birth of the child, evidence of such should also be provided to the HR Dept and written notification provided to their manager. (Please note a father's entitlement to this time off applies to only one pregnancy).

Miscarriage

- 2.5. Maternity leave is not available where a miscarriage occurring up to and including the 24th week of pregnancy, however any confinement occurring after the 24th week is covered.

Early Confinement

- 2.6. If a period of confinement should take place three weeks or more before the expected week of confinement, and where the Maternity leave has not already begun, the 26 weeks Maternity leave will be effective from that date.

Postponement

- 2.7. In the event of hospitalisation of the child an employee may apply to postpone all or some of the last four weeks maternity leave after the birth of the child. This leave can be postponed for a maximum of 6 months. To apply you must write to the HR dept directly including a letter from the hospital outlining the hospitalisation of the baby.

Paid Maternity Leave

- 2.8. Employees who have the necessary PRSI contributions are entitled to Maternity Benefit paid by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.
- 2.9. As of 1st April 2010 employees with 12 months or more continual service at the date of commencement of their maternity leave will receive:
- 2.9.1. Full salary for 18 weeks, less Maternity Benefit received by the employee during the first 18 weeks of maternity leave. (please see section 3.3 under Procedures below for details on Social Welfare payment deductions from your salary)
- 2.9.2. Maternity Benefit payment from the Dept of Social & Family Affairs will only apply for the remaining 8 weeks of the 26 week Maternity leave period.
- 2.10. All other employees on maternity leave (i.e. those with less than 12 months continual service); are only entitled to Maternity Benefit from the Dept of Social, Community and Family Affairs, where applicable.

Service	Less than 12 months	12 months or more
Time off		
First 18 weeks	Maternity Benefit	Full pay less Maternity Benefit
Weeks 19 to 26 inc	Maternity Benefit	Maternity Benefit
Weeks 26 to 42	No pay	No pay

Rights during Maternity leave

Employment rights

- 2.11. During Maternity Leave an employee will be deemed to be in employment and her employment rights with the exception of remuneration are observed as if she were present at work.

Holidays

- 2.12. During Maternity Leave the employee is entitled to accrue holidays. However if for any reason where additional leave may be granted after the maximum 42 weeks Maternity Leave, holidays will not accrue and will be adjusted in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997: Holidays.
- 2.13. Where an employee is employed on a Fixed Term Contract/Specified Purpose contract which is due to expire during the end of the maternity period, her protection under the Act also expires.
- 2.14. Public holidays occurring during a period of maternity leave will accrue and be paid in addition to Maternity Pay.

Staff Pensions

- 2.15. While on Maternity leave, and where an employee is currently within the Society Pension Scheme, her pension contributions will be paid. The employer's and employee's contribution will be paid as normal for the entire duration of the Maternity and additional Maternity leave. The employee's contribution will be deducted at source upon her return to work.
- 2.16. Where an employee qualifies for paid Maternity benefit an employee's pension contribution will be deducted at source during the 18 week full payment period, for the remaining Maternity leave/Additional unpaid Maternity leave the employer's and employee's contribution will be paid as normal for the remaining duration. The employee's contribution will then be deducted at source upon her return to work.
- 2.17. If an employee on maternity leave does not return to work the Employee Pension contributions due will be deducted from the employee's final pay (holidays due to the employee)
- 2.18. Employees who are eligible for paid Maternity leave must make arrangements directly with the Payroll dept regarding their pension contributions for any remaining period of unpaid leave.

Breastfeeding:

- 2.19. If you are breastfeeding you are entitled to a reduction on your working hours of one hour per day or (where suitable facilities are available) a break of one hour per day to use the facilities provided in the workplace without loss of pay.
- 2.20. The one-hour break may be split into shorter periods of time totalling one hour.
- 2.21. Part time employees will be entitled to a pro rata benefit.

Probation:

- 2.22. If any part of the Maternity leave occurs during a period of probation, the probation period will be extended proportionally.

Sick leave:

- 2.23. Maternity leave and Additional Maternity leave are not sick leave and will not count as a break in service. Sick leave that is covered by a medical certificate which occurs prior to the commencement of Maternity leave will be dealt with in accordance with the Sick pay policy and in certain circumstances may be treated as Health & Safety leave as appropriate.

Loan Repayments:

- 2.24. If you are a borrower of the Society, qualify for paid Maternity benefit, and make your loan repayments by salary deduction the loan repayment will continue to be deducted from your salary during the 18 week full payment period. For the remaining Maternity leave/Additional unpaid Maternity leave you will need to make arrangements with the Mortgage Administration Manager for an alternative repayment method of your loan.
- 2.25. If you do not qualify for paid Maternity benefit you will need to make arrangements with the Mortgage Administration Manager for an alternative repayment method of your loan for your full Maternity leave/Additional Maternity leave period.

3. Procedures:

To qualify for Maternity Leave and Maternity Pay the following procedures must be followed:

- 3.1. The employee must notify the HR Dept in writing no later than 4 weeks prior to the commencement of her Maternity leave. This notification must also be accompanied by a Medical Certificate or the Maternity Benefit Form (MB10) which is available directly from the Dept of Social & Family Affairs. The MB10 form must be signed by the employee's doctor confirming the pregnancy and specifying the expected week of confinement.
- 3.2. Where an employee qualifies for paid Maternity leave, the employee should also apply for Statutory Maternity Benefit to the Dept of Social & Family Affairs.
- 3.3. Once an employee has made an application to the Dept of Social & Family Affairs for Maternity Benefit, the Dept of Social & Family Affairs will issue the employee with a letter confirming the amount of Maternity Benefit due, per week, to the employee. Please ensure that you send a copy of this letter to the HR Dept as soon as you receive it. Failure to do so will result in salary less, the current maximum Social Welfare Benefit, been payable to the employee, until said letter is received by HR.
- 3.4. Employees must give at least four weeks' notice of the intention to return to work in writing. Return to work is dependent on the four weeks notice, which is mandatory.
- 3.5. Employees must inform their manager and the HR Department in writing of their intention to take the sixteen weeks additional leave no later than four weeks before the end of the twenty-six weeks maternity period.

4. For further information regarding any of the above please contact your HR Representative directly.