

Newman University

New and Expectant Mothers

Code of Practice for Managers

1. Introduction

This code of practice is intended to give practical help and advice to managers to enable them to comply with Newman University's New and Expectant Mothers Procedure.

A greater number of women now work for longer while they are pregnant, and many return to work while they are still breast feeding. Pregnancy should not be equated with ill health, however, health and safety implications may arise which can normally be adequately addressed by sensible health and safety management procedures.

Most hazards will be identifiable through the self-completed, risk assessment and review process. However managers will need to keep the relevant risk assessments under review to see if further control measures are required in the light of the changing condition of the new or expectant mothers.

2. Definition

The phrase 'new and expectant mothers' means a worker who is pregnant, who has given birth within the previous six months, who is breast feeding, or who has had a stillborn child after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The Workplace (Health, Safety, and Welfare) Regulations 1992 do not put a time limit on when breast feeding should cease.

3. What New and Expectant Mothers Should Do

New and expectant mothers are expected to notify their managers and HR by providing a written and signed certificate from a registered medical practitioner or a registered midwife confirming the pregnancy or (if needed) that she has recently given birth.

Managers, who receive a verbal confirmation from the employee, should encourage that employee to obtain formal confirmation as soon as possible so that the relevant action can be initiated. Where a manager has not been informed and only suspects an employee has a condition which could lead to an increased risk to that employee or others, the matter may need advice from HR. This does not preclude Managers taking action where they feel certain a hazardous condition does exist.

4 Risk Assessment

The risks involved with new and expectant mothers include those to the unborn child or the child of a mother still breast-feeding and not just risks to the mother herself. A specific risk assessment template (with questions related to specific hazards) is completed by the individual and to be shared with their manager so that an agreed action plan can be recorded if needed.

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5 Action Plan

The Manager must decide what to do if the risk assessment reveals that there is a hazard or work process that presents a potential danger to the health or safety of the new or expectant mother or their future children. If managers require specific help this can be obtained from the Health & Safety officer who may refer to occupational health.

All employees have the right to see and know the results of the risk assessment affecting them and what control measures are being taken to ensure they are not exposed to unnecessary risks. They will see this when they forward on the completed assessment to health_and_safety@newman.ac.uk

If after taking all the necessary steps to reduce the risk there remains a significant risk to the new or expectant mother then the following steps should be taken.

Step 1. Temporary adjustment of the working conditions and or hours of work. If this is not reasonable to do, or would not avoid the risk, go to step 2.

Step 2. Offer alternative work if any is available; If this is not feasible, go to step 3

Step 3. Subject to regular review, authorise special paid leave from work as long as necessary to protect her health and safety or that of the child.

The actions in steps 1-3 above are only necessary if the result of the risk assessment or a medical certificate identifies a significant safety problem.

If in doubt about the action to take, managers should seek the advice of the Head of HR, and if necessary the Health and Safety Manager, either may seek further advice from the Occupational Health Service.

6 Evening Weekend Working

Managers should take special account of new or expectant mothers who may be required to work out of the normal daytime hours. Additional risks may apply due to lone or remote working. If a new or expectant mother provides a medical certificate stating that evening or weekend working is unsuitable due to their condition then alternative arrangements will need to be made. Refer to Steps 1-3 above.

7 Reviewing Risk Assessments

Risk assessments for new and expectant mothers must be kept under review particularly if there are significant changes to ensure compliance with their health, safety, and welfare.

References:

1. NU New and Expectant Mother's Procedure PRO 011
2. NU New and Expectant Mothers Code of Practice for Managers
3. NU New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Form Template