



Bargaining Support Negotiators' Toolkit

Maternity leave & pay

Maternity rights, either directly or indirectly, affect the vast majority of workers. The statutory level of state provision for maternity is inadequate and this makes it a crucial bargaining issue. This module is designed to help branches and stewards bargain with employers for better maternity rights.

Getting a good maternity rights agreement can be a difficult task. In this module we will take you through the process step-by-step to help you get the best deal possible for your members. It will give you:

- **An understanding of the laws relating to maternity rights**
- **The tools to do a survey research to find out what members want**
- **A model agreement to use as a basis for a new agreement**
- **Information on where to find out more about maternity rights**

Start by finding out what the law says on maternity rights

Getting the information you need. The first step to negotiating a good maternity rights agreement is finding out what the law says. New rights were introduced for working women on 1st April 2007 which include longer maternity leave, the extension of the period of Statutory Maternity Parent Pay and the removal of the qualifying period of service for "Additional Maternity Leave".

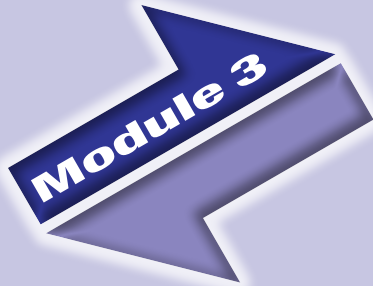
In this pack you will find the UNISON factsheet that will give you all the essential information on statutory maternity rights. You can also download it here: <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Maternity%20Rights%20March%202007.2.doc>

Finding out what your members want. The next step towards negotiating a good maternity rights agreement is to find out what areas are most important to your branch members. A good way of doing this is to send a survey round to branch members to collect their views. This is also a great opportunity to get people involved in the work of the union. You might even consider setting up a working group of members to oversee your negotiations.

You can download a draft survey to help you get started. Feel free to change the survey form as you see fit. You will know better than anyone the kind of issues which your members need to be asked about. There is a draft survey in your pack, or you can find it here: <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Branch%20model%20maternity%20questionnaire.doc>

Use our form to start your own survey of branch members





Bargaining Support **Negotiators' Toolkit** **Maternity leave & pay continued...**



*UNISON
branches across
the UK are
winning better
maternity deals*

Going beyond the minimum. Statutory maternity rights are just the minimum that working women are entitled to. UNISON branches across the country have won maternity rights agreements that are far better than the statutory minimum. Details of these agreements can be found on the Bargaining Information System. To find out about how to get hold of details of these agreements get in touch at Bargaining Support Group is: 1, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9AJ, or e-mail bsg@unison.co.uk

A model maternity rights agreement. Using the information you've accessed from the Bargaining Information System and your survey of branch members, try drawing up a draft maternity rights agreement which suits your needs. As a starting point, you can use our Model Maternity Rights Agreement. This agreement covers all the key areas of maternity rights and provides for generous maternity provision. You will know what is or is not a realistic agreement to put before employers, but this model agreement is a good place to start. You can find the model agreement in you pack or you can download it from this website: <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Model%20Maternity%20Agreement.doc>



*Use the model
maternity
rights
agreement as a
starting point*



*The full
guidance on
bargaining for
maternity rights
covers a whole
range of issues*

Full guidance on bargaining for maternity rights. The full process of surveying members, drawing up an agreement and negotiating with employers can throw up numerous opportunities and problems. To help you deal with these we have written full guidance on maternity rights which covers a whole range of issues, which is included in this pack. You can also download it from this website: <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/Bargaining%20for%20Maternity%20Rights%20-%20March%2020071.1.doc>

Regional and National Office Support. Negotiating a new maternity rights agreement can be a daunting task if you're doing it for the first time. But remember, you are not on your own. Your regional office and the national office has a wealth of resources to support you during this process. So don't be afraid to pick up the phone and ask for help. You can call UNISONdirect at 0845 355 0845 or 1, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9AJ, or e-mail bsg@unison.co.uk



*Remember,
you're not on
your own*



*Get your
agreement
on BIS*

Fill out the BIS Questionnaire and send us your agreements. A crucial further step once you have reached a maternity rights agreement is letting UNISON know about it. By sharing information your branch can help the union to spread best practice, identify obstructive employers and monitor the implementation of employment rights. Fill out the Bargaining Information System (BIS) questionnaire included in this pack, and return it along with your agreement, to Bargaining Support at the address above. This information will then be put on BIS to help provide a more detailed picture of conditions in the workplace.