General H&S Risk Assessment

A checklist of Safe Working Practices can be found at the foot of this assessment

Location / Activities Assessment

Date:	Assessed by:	Description:	Assessment No: Women at Work.3
10th January 2025	**Andrew Brayam**	**Women at Work** **Returning Work After Childbirth**	Review Date: Jan-2027 or earlier if significant changes

Ref:	What has the potential to cause harm (hazard)?	Who or what may be affected?	Record any preventative and protective measures already in place and / or recommend actions.	S	L	R	Priority	What further action could be taken to remove or reduce risk? Responsible Person to sign-off.	Revised Risk S	Revised Risk L	Revised Risk R

Introduction

In the UK, employers are legally required to ensure the health and safety of their employees, including those of childbearing age. This includes those returning to work after maternity leave or any extended absence can present several hazards.
This duty is enforced through various legislations such as the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, and the **Equality Act 2010**. These laws mandate that employers conduct comprehensive risk assessments to identify potential hazards and implement control measures to protect the well-being of all employees.

By identifying and assessing specific impacts, the United Synagogue can better tailor various control measures to ensure the health and safety of women returning to work after maternity leave.

In **all** cases of extended absence a face-to-face return to work interview **must** be conducted **prior** to recommencing work. The general HR procedure of Returning to Work must be followed.

01	**Change of Working Practices/Policies** New protocols or procedures may have been implemented during the absence.	Employees / Volunteers. Colleagues. Family and Friends.	Provide comprehensive updates and training sessions on new policies.	3	4	12	H	Encourage "keeping-in-touch days "during maternity leave.	3	2	**6** M

Key:	S = Severity	L = Likelihood	S x L = R: R = Residual Risk Rating or Priority
	5 – Fatality	5 – Certain	**1 – 4 Low Priority**. Action required to reduce risk. Time effort & cost proportionate to risk.
	4 – Major Injury	4 – Very Likely	**5-10 Medium Priority**. Action required soon to control. Interim measures may be required.
	3 – Up to three days injury	3 – Likely	**11–16 High Priority**. Urgent action required. Further resources may be needed.
	2 – Minor Injury (treatment off site)	2 – May happen	**17–25 Very High Priority**. Immediate action required. Extra resources likely to be required.
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02	**Change of Role / Duties/Responsibilities** Job role may have evolved, with new tasks or responsibilities amended.	As above	Arrange a meeting with the manager to clearly outline any changes in duties and provide necessary training or support.	4	3	12	H	Encourage "keeping in touch days "during maternity leave.	2	3	**6** M
03	**Change of Location** Office relocation or different seating arrangement can create disorientation.	As above	Offer a site tour or detailed information on the new location, and provide a map if necessary.	2	3	6	M	Encourage "keeping in touch days "during maternity leave.	2	2	**4** L
04	**Change of Equipment** New hardware or tools may be unfamiliar.	As above	Schedule hands-on training and provide user manuals or quick-start guides.	3	4	12	H	Close supervision whilst acclimatising to new equipment.	2	2	**4** L
05	**New Software** Introduction of new software applications could disrupt work efficiency.	As above	Conduct software training sessions and provide access to support resources.	4	4	46	H	Close supervision whilst acclimatising to new equipment.	2	2	**4** L

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06	**Change of Colleagues or Manager** New team members or changes in team dynamics might affect collaboration and communication.	As above	Facilitate team-building activities and encourage open communication channels.	3	4	12	H	Team building exercises / talks.	3	2	**6** M
07	**Mental Health and Well-being** The stress of transitioning back to work can impact mental health. **Stress**: Managing work stress along with post-natal stress or depression can be overwhelming.	As above	Offer flexible working hours, access to counselling services, and promote a supportive work culture. Provide access to stress management resources. Promote a supportive work environment.	4	4	16	H	Encourage “keeping in touch days “during maternity leave. Provide access to counselling.	3	2	**6** M

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08	**Work-Life Balance** Struggling to balance work responsibilities and personal life after the absence.	As above	Implement family-friendly policies, such as remote working options and flexible schedules.	4	4	16	H	Encourage "keeping in touch days "during maternity leave. Provide access to counselling.	3	2	**6** M
09	**Physical Adjustments** Physical changes (especially post-maternity) may require adjustments in the workplace environment.	As above	Offer ergonomic assessments and accommodations as needed.	3	3	9	M	Close supervision and access to regular workplace assessment.	2	2	**4** L
10	**Facilities** Lack of appropriate facilities, such as rest rooms or breastfeeding areas, can be a concern.	As above	Make reasonable adjustment to ensure adequate facilities are available. Promote awareness of these facilities.	3	4	12	H	Implement family-friendly policies, such as remote working options and flexible schedules.	2	2	**4** L

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11	**Working Hours** Long or irregular working hours can be difficult to manage with childcare responsibilities.	As above	Offer flexible working arrangements. Where appropriate offer home-working options. Offer part-time options.	2	3	6	M	Regular assessment meetings.	1	3	**3** L
12	**Visual Display Units (VDUs)** Prolonged use of screens can cause eye strain and other health issues.	As above	Provide ergonomic equipment. Encourage regular breaks.	3	2	6	M	Regular assessment meetings.	2	2	**4** L
13	**Working Alone** Working in isolation can be risky, especially if there are no safety measures in place.	As above	Implement safety measures (e.g., check-in systems). Provide clear communication channels. See Lone Working policy.	2	2	4	L	Implement Lone Working policy.	2	1	**2** L

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14	**Working at Height** If your job involves working at heights, it can pose additional risks	As above	Provide proper training and equipment. Follow safety regulations.	4	2	8	M	Avoid working at height entirely unless absolutely essential.	1	1	**1** L
15	**Baby unwell** Anxiety, inability to concentrate, stress and depression. Inability to manage work-home balance. Has the potential to cause many of the above outcomes.	As above	Offer flexible working arrangements. Where appropriate offer home-working options. Offer part-time options. Offer help with counselling.	5	4	20	V H	Allow mother as much time as is necessary. Manager to speak regularly to continually assess the situation.	3	3	**9** M

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Women at Work

Safe Working Practices for Returning to Work After Childbirth

This guidance document summarises the findings of a risk assessment and is intended as an aid for women retuning to work after maternity leave and their managers. Managers may include HR Partners, H&S officers, Training coordinators or Directors and not necessarily be direct line managers.

It is essential to inform your line manager as soon as it is practical of your intended return to work date, so that appropriate measures can be taken to manage your safety and well-being at work.

Introduction

In the UK, employers are legally required to ensure the health and safety of their employees, including those of childbearing age. This includes those returning to work after maternity leave or any extended absence. This document outlines safe working practices to protect the well-being of women of childbearing age, in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Equality Act 2010.

Key Areas of Concern and Recommended Actions

In **all** cases of extended absence a face to face return to work interview **must** be conducted **prior** to recommencing work.

Change of Working Practices/Policies

- **Hazard**: New protocols or procedures may have been implemented during the absence.
- **Action**: Provide comprehensive updates and training sessions on new policies. Encourage "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave to keep employees informed and engaged.

Change of Role/Duties/Responsibilities

- **Hazard**: Job role may have evolved, with new tasks or responsibilities.
- **Action**: Arrange a meeting with the manager to clearly outline any changes in duties and provide necessary training or support. Encourage "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave to facilitate a smoother transition.

Change of Location

- **Hazard**: Office relocation or different seating arrangement can create disorientation.
- **Action**: Offer a site tour or detailed information on the new location, and provide a drawing if necessary. Encourage "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave to help employees stay connected.

Change of Equipment

- **Hazard**: New hardware or tools may be unfamiliar.
- **Action**: Schedule hands-on training and provide user manuals or quick-start guides. Close supervision while acclimatising to new equipment to ensure safety and efficiency.

New Software

- **Hazard**: Introduction of new software applications could disrupt work efficiency.
- **Action**: Conduct software training sessions and provide access to support resources. Close supervision while acclimatising to new software to ensure smooth integration.

Change of Colleagues or Manager

- **Hazard**: New team members or changes in team dynamics might affect collaboration and communication.
- **Action**: Facilitate team-building activities and encourage open communication channels to foster a cohesive work environment.

Mental Health and Well-being

- **Hazard**: The stress of transitioning back to work can impact mental health.
- **Action**: Offer flexible working hours, access to counselling services, and promote a supportive work culture. Provide access to stress management resources and encourage "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave.

Work-Life Balance

- **Hazard**: Struggling to balance work responsibilities and personal life after the absence.
- **Action**: Implement family-friendly policies, such as remote working options and flexible schedules. Provide access to counselling and encourage "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave.

Physical Adjustments

- **Hazard**: Physical changes (especially post-maternity) may require adjustments in the workplace environment.
- **Action**: Offer ergonomic assessments and accommodations as needed. Close supervision and access to regular workplace assessments to ensure comfort and safety.

Facilities

- **Hazard**: Lack of appropriate facilities, such as rest rooms or breastfeeding areas.
- **Action**: Make reasonable adjustments to ensure adequate facilities are available. Promote awareness of these facilities and implement family-friendly policies.

Working Hours

- **Hazard**: Long or irregular working hours can be difficult to manage with childcare responsibilities.
- **Action**: Offer flexible working arrangements, home-working options, and part-time options. Conduct regular assessment meetings to ensure the arrangements are effective.

Visual Display Units (VDUs)

- **Hazard**: Prolonged use of screens can cause eye strain and other health issues.
- **Action**: Provide ergonomic equipment and encourage regular breaks. Conduct regular assessment meetings to monitor and address any issues.

Working Alone

- **Hazard**: Working in isolation can be risky, especially if there are no safety measures in place.

- **Action**: Implement safety measures (e.g., check-in systems) and provide clear communication channels. Refer to the Lone Working policy for additional guidelines.

Working at Height

- **Hazard**: If your job involves working at heights, it can pose additional risks.
- **Action**: Provide proper training and equipment. Follow safety regulations and avoid working at height unless absolutely essential.

Baby Unwell

- **Hazard**: Anxiety, inability to concentrate, stress, and depression due to an unwell baby.
- **Action**: Offer flexible working arrangements, home-working options, part-time options, and counselling. Allow the mother as much time as necessary and conduct regular assessments to continually monitor the situation.

Flexible Working Hours

Offering flexible working hours can significantly reduce stress and help employees manage their work-life balance more effectively. This flexibility allows them to attend to personal and family needs without compromising their professional responsibilities.

Access to Counselling Services

Providing access to professional counselling services is essential. These services can offer support for dealing with stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Employees should be encouraged to seek help when needed and be assured that their privacy will be respected.

Supportive Work Culture

Promoting a supportive work culture is vital for mental well-being. This includes fostering an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing their mental health concerns without fear of stigma or discrimination. Regular check-ins with managers and open communication channels can help identify and address any issues early on.

Stress Management Resources

Offering resources for stress management, such as workshops, webinars, and self-help materials, can empower employees to manage their stress effectively. These resources can include techniques for relaxation, mindfulness, and time management.

Keeping in Touch Days

Encouraging "keeping in touch days" during maternity leave can help employees stay connected with their workplace. These days can be used for training, team meetings, or simply catching up with colleagues, making the transition back to work smoother.

Regular Assessments

Conducting regular assessments of the employee's mental health and well-being can help identify any emerging issues and provide timely support. These assessments can be informal check-ins or more structured evaluations, depending on the employee's needs.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Implementing family-friendly policies, such as remote working options and part-time schedules, can help employees manage their work and personal life more effectively. These arrangements can reduce the pressure of balancing multiple responsibilities and improve overall well-being.

Access to Support Groups

Providing access to support groups, either within the organization or through external networks, can offer a sense of community and shared experience. These groups can provide emotional support, practical advice, and a platform for discussing common challenges.

Conclusion

By implementing these safe working practices, our organisation can ensure a supportive and safe environment for women returning to work after maternity leave. Regular reviews and updates to these practices will help maintain compliance with legal requirements and promote the well-being of all employees.

If you need any specific information or further assistance, feel free to ask the HR Department or the H&S Department.