



Case study - Pregnancy

Gemma is 39 and expecting her first baby. She is a sales representative for a newly-created small business. Her job in the sales team involves quite a bit of travelling and long hours. She informed Amit, her manager, when was four and a half months pregnant.

This is Amit's first experience of dealing with a pregnant employee and he wants to make sure that he gets everything right.

He does some initial research on what he should do by checking on the Health and Safety Executive web site – www.hse.gov.uk .

As a result, he arranges Gemma's first risk assessment. This means that he makes time to talk to Gemma about all aspects of her job. He can then discuss any reasonable adjustments which may need to be made. He can also set a date for a further review in 8 weeks' time.

Fortunately, Gemma is fit and healthy. She agrees to try to reduce her hours by not taking on extra work. Amit will try to ensure that she is allocated job appointments nearer home. He encourages Gemma to catch up on her paperwork at home rather than make journeys into the office especially when she needs to attend ante-natal care. They both agree that Amit can make contact with her at home.

At Gemma's next scheduled risk assessment meeting, she tells Amit that although her health is good, her GP has warned her about her raised blood pressure. She believes that driving in the heat of August in a car without air-conditioning is adding to the problem.

Amit agrees to further reduce necessary driving distances as far as possible until she goes on maternity leave. There is also some figure reconciliation work that she can do at home. He also does a home visit to ensure that the workstation she uses meets health and safety standards.

In their final meeting before Gemma goes on maternity leave, Amit discusses with her what contact he will have with her while she is away. The company has already informed her of her expected return date- 52 weeks from now.



He will send her the hard copy of the company bi-monthly news sheet plus any post marked 'personal'. He will also email her once a month to keep lines of communication open but there will be no obligation on her to respond.

He also explained to her the new statutory right to ten 'keeping in touch' days whereby if both she and her employer agree, Gemma can come in to work and be paid during her maternity leave.

They also discussed her working pattern when she returns from maternity leave. Gemma has decided that she will submit her request to work flexibly; three days a week is her preferred option. Before she leaves she will include in her written and dated request the date when she would like her new working pattern to begin and how the business might deal with any effects of her request.

It's now October the following year and Gemma returns to work. She opted to come into work for two 'keeping in touch' days to take part in a training event.

She is very happy to return to the company, particularly in view of the fact that they have agreed to her request to work three days a week.

Gemma felt that her experience of being managed throughout her pregnancy was very positive. She believes that the support she received from her manager was crucial to her feeling confident and secure in making the decision to return to work after one year's absence.

The company has retained a fully-trained committed employee with a strong sense of loyalty to the company that treated her well.