

Supporting Dental Professionals Through Baby Loss: Resources and practical information

We know that navigating leave and financial entitlements after baby loss can feel overwhelming. Below is a breakdown of the different types of maternity and parental pay and leave available, depending on whether you are employed by the NHS, working as an NHS dental performer, or self-employed/private.

Leave After Loss

Babies stillborn at or after 24 completed weeks (or those who die neonatally) give rise to full statutory maternity/paternity leave and pay entitlements as if the baby had lived. We have highlighted the information below relevant to the different roles.

Miscarriage

Babies dying before 24 weeks would be classified as miscarriage, and statutory maternity/paternity leave is not available.

Miscarriage bereavement leave is currently available for staff working within the NHS (in salaried services). This is 10 days paid leave for the person who miscarried, and 5 days for the partner.¹

Some employers/ organisations might offer a period of paid leave specifically for pregnancy loss. Otherwise, sick leave or compassionate leave might apply.²

Statutory Maternity Allowance (SMA)

Parents can take up to 52 weeks off under statutory maternity leave.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Statutory Maternity Allowance (SMA) provide up to 39 weeks of paid leave. Statutory maternity pay/allowance is provided by the government. NHS maternity pay is in addition for eligible salaried dentists or dental performers. The final 13 weeks are typically unpaid.

Private dentists or other dental care professionals without NHS contracts aren't eligible for NHS maternity pay but can still apply for SMA. If a claim has already been submitted, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will need to be updated about the stillbirth.

1. Statutory Entitlements

These apply across all professions and are provided by the government.

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/03/paid-leave-for-nhs-staff-experiencing-pregnancy-loss/#:~:text=NHS%20staff%20who%20suffer%20a,baby%20loss%20charities%20and%20organisations>

² <https://www.acas.org.uk/time-off-for-bereavement/stillbirth-or-miscarriage>

Type of Pay	Who It Applies To	How Long It Lasts	Payment Structure
Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)	Employees with qualifying service	Up to 39 weeks	First 6 weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings; next 33 weeks at a government-set flat rate
Statutory Maternity Allowance (SMA)	Self-employed, or those not eligible for SMP	Up to 39 weeks	Flat rate for the full 39 weeks (same flat rate as SMP's later weeks)

2. NHS Maternity Pay for Salaried Dentists

Salaried NHS dentists are covered under NHS employment terms and conditions.

- **Eligibility:** 12 months continuous NHS service before the 11th week before your baby is due.
- **Duration & Pay:**
 - First 8 weeks: full pay (minus SMP/SMA if also claimed)
 - Next 18 weeks: half pay + SMP/SMA (if this does not exceed full pay)
 - Next 13 weeks: SMP/SMA only
 - Final 13 weeks: unpaid leave

This provides up to **52 weeks leave** in total.

3. NHS Maternity Pay for Dental Performers (Associates)

Dentists working under an NHS contract, but not salaried employees (performers/associates) have a different scheme.

- **Eligibility checklist:**
 - On an NHS performer list for at least 2 years (including foundation year) by the 15th week before your due date
 - 26 weeks continuous NHS service before that same point
 - Ceased clinical work by the 11th week before your due date
- **Payment details:**
 - Up to **26 weeks of NHS maternity pay**
 - Weekly amount based on *Net Pensionable Earnings Equivalent (NPEE)*
 - **Capped at £1,660 per week** (£3,630 if more than 50% of work is orthodontics)
 - Payments are taxable and pensionable
 - If you receive Statutory Maternity Allowance, this is deducted from NHS maternity pay
- **After 26 weeks:** Any remaining leave (up to 52 weeks in total) would be unpaid.

4. Worked Example for a dental performer with NHS income of £60,000 per year:

- Annual NHS income: £60,000 → weekly NPEE = ~£1,154
- NHS maternity pay: £1,154 per week (since this is below the cap)
- Payable for up to 26 weeks = ~£30,000 total
- Any SMA received would be deducted from this amount.

Applying for NHS Parental Leave Pay

Dentists working under an NHS contract can apply for NHS parental leave pay using the form available on the [NHSBSA website](#).³ This needs to be completed with the practice owner and emailed to the address on the form. They may ask to see a stillbirth certificate as evidence.

Links which may help

- **Abortion Talk** | <https://abortiontalk.com> | 0333 090 9266
- **ARC (Antenatal Results & Choices)** | <https://arc-uk.org>
- **BDA Benevolent Fund** | <https://bdabenevolentfund.org.uk> | 020 7486 4994
- **Bliss** | <https://bliss.org.uk>
- **Confidential (Peer Support Line)** | <https://confidential-helpline.org> | 0333 987 5158
- **Cradle** | <https://cradlecharity.org>
- **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** | 0800 169 0283
- **Dentists' Health Support Trust (DHST)** | <https://dentistshealthsupporttrust.org> | 020 7224 4671
- **Miscarriage Association** | <https://miscarriageassociation.org.uk>
- **National Bereavement Care Pathway** | <https://nbcpathway.org.uk>
- **NHS Parental & Sick Leave Forms (SFE)** | <https://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/activity-payment-and-pension-services/statement-financial-entitlement-sfe>
- **NHS Terms & Conditions of Service Handbook (Sections 15 & 23)** | <https://nhsemployers.org/publications/tchandbook>
- **Petals (Counselling)** | <https://petalscharity.org>
- **Sands (Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Charity)** | <https://sands.org.uk> | 0808 164 3332
- **Saying Goodbye** | <https://sayinggoodbye.org>
- **Teddy's Wish** | <https://teddyswish.org>
- **Tommy's: Pregnancy Loss & Support** | <https://tommys.org/baby-loss-support>

Information collated by Jessica Burley and the BDA Benevolent Fund

Correct as of October 2025 – check NHSBSA and NHS Employers for latest updates

³ chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2017-04/SFE%28PL%29_R1_20170201.pdf