



# PREGNANCY AND REFEREEING POLICY

JUNE 2015



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# Pregnancy and Refereeing Policy June 2015

## Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to all female referees other than those who are directly employed by Professional Game Match Officials Ltd under a contract of employment.

## General principles

This policy outlines points to consider in relation to referees who are pregnant or have recently given birth, and sets out the arrangements for notification of pregnancy, pregnancy-related sickness, health and safety and returning to refereeing duties following maternity.

## Statutory Rights

### Time off

Individuals who are employees of an organisation may be entitled to statutory maternity leave, time off for ante-natal care and/or shared parental leave under UK legislation, provided the required eligibility criteria are met.

### Pay

Similarly, statutory maternity pay may be payable to an employee of an organisation or those who are treated as “employed earners” for the purposes of national insurance contributions, provided the required eligibility criteria are met.

Referees are registered by The Football Association (“The FA”) but are not employed by it. Similarly, referees receive match fees and travel expenses from the clubs they are appointed by but they are not employed by the clubs. Therefore, referees are unlikely to be eligible for statutory maternity or shared parental leave pay from either The FA or the club appointing them unless they are “employed earners” for national insurance purposes.

Eligibility for time off and maternity pay should be checked on a case-by-case basis.

## Equal Treatment

Referees have the right not to be treated less favourably, unfavourably, discriminated against harassed or subjected to a detriment because of pregnancy or maternity.

Accordingly, female referees should not be treated less favourably or unfavourably as a result of being pregnant, pregnancy related sickness or for taking time off for maternity. This includes, but is not limited to, a pregnant referee being offered the same access to training, promotion and other activities as she would have been had she not been pregnant.

## Notification

You should inform the County FA Referee Development Officer (“RDO”) or Regional Referee Manager (“RRM”) as soon as possible that you are pregnant. The RDO should notify the RRM. This is important as there may be health and safety considerations to take into account given that football is a contact sport. Safeguards may need to be put in place in order to protect your health and safety (please see further below in relation to Health and Safety).

## Sickness

There may be times when you experience pregnancy-related sickness and are unable to referee. Referees are not eligible for sick pay from The FA. However, periods of pregnancy-related sickness will be disregarded in any decisions affecting your career as a referee such as future promotion-related decisions.

## Health and Safety

There is a general duty to take care of the health and safety of all referees. Accordingly, upon notification of your pregnancy we will need to ask you to liaise with your GP (who will be best placed to advise on your personal state of health) to discuss whether you should continue refereeing or not. Accordingly, it is important that you notify us as soon as possible that you are pregnant. To enable your GP to advise properly we will provide you with information as to any risks associated with refereeing.

Once you have discussed this with your GP, we will discuss your intentions with you in relation to continuing with your refereeing duties. If it is determined that you would be exposed to health risks in continuing to carry out refereeing duties, we will take such steps as are reasonable (and for as long as is necessary) to remove or prevent your exposure to those risks. This may involve temporarily relieving you from all or some of your duties as a referee or altering your working conditions, unless the risk can be avoided through other action. However, no decision will be made to do this before discussing the issue with you first.

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The current medical guidance received by The FA is that pregnant referees should not continue in their duties beyond 12 weeks of pregnancy given the risk to the baby if you are hit by a ball or collide with a player. However, it is appreciated that each individual is different and therefore we will seek your views in relation to your continuing with your duties, in addition we may need to seek your permission to permit your GP or Consultant to disclose sufficient information to The FA to ascertain the suitability of your continuing to referee.

### **Deciding not to return to refereeing**

If you do not intend to return to refereeing you should notify your RRM in writing at the earliest opportunity and we will remove you from the referee list and take you off the list for receiving information if you wish.

### **Returning to refereeing**

Shortly before you take time off for to have your baby you may wish to discuss with your RRM the arrangements for opportunities for you to remain in contact, should you wish to do so, during your time out of refereeing. Unless you request otherwise, you will remain on circulation lists for The FA and County FA information during your time out of refereeing.

When you decide to return to refereeing there is still a general duty to take care of the health and safety of new mothers. Again we will need to ask you to liaise with your GP as to when you should return to refereeing. The law prohibits you from working during the two weeks following childbirth. We would expect to apply this to refereeing matches.

Your return to refereeing is subject to:

- the successful completion of a fitness test]; and
- (depending on your level as a referee) either attendance at a compulsory training seminar to update you on any changes in The Laws of the Game; or
- receiving an update on any changes in The Laws of the Game.

The fitness test must be successfully completed before you resume your duties.

This policy does not form part of the terms under which a woman is registered as a referee and may be amended at any time.



For further information and guidance  
please contact:

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