

Pregnancy - Help and Advice

This is a brief guide for students who become pregnant during their studies. It covers entitlement to additional sources of income and useful resource references.

I think I am pregnant. What should I do?

First things first - you will need to take a test. You may be able to get free pregnancy tests at your GP, family planning clinic or young person's clinic such as the Brook Centre. For further information on where you can take a free pregnancy test, you may wish to visit www.brook.org.uk (advice for under 25s only). Alternatively, you can visit the Family Planning Association's website at www.fpa.org.uk. Many chemists have tests but they will charge.

I have just found out I am pregnant and would like to explore my options.

You will need time to adjust to the thought of being pregnant and to consider your options. A baby will drastically change your life as well as those around you so it is important to get support, guidance and advice early. Here are some useful contacts:

Brook Centre 0808 802 1234 (under 25 years)

www.brook.org.uk

British Pregnancy Advisory Service 03457 304030

www.bpas.org

Marie Stopes Clinic 0345 300 8090

www.mariestopes.org.uk

Family Planning Association 0300 123 7123

www.fpa.org.uk

While I am pregnant what health benefits am I entitled to?

Free prescriptions and free dental treatment.

You must apply for a maternity exemption certificate on form FW8 available from your health visitor, doctor or midwife. It is available to all pregnant women and up to 12 months after the baby is born.

Healthy Start Vouchers.

These help contribute to the cost of formula milk, fresh milk, fruit and vegetables during your pregnancy and until your child/children reach four years old. You can also apply for vouchers for essential vitamins too. Full eligibility information and details on how to apply can be found here: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

What other financial help is available?

Generally, any extra Student Support usually starts once the baby is born. This is explained in the following Welfare Advice Guides:

- Childcare Grants and Extra Money for Student Parents
- Nursing and Midwifery Students

However, if you have been working or in receipt of certain welfare benefits, there may be extra financial support you can receive during the pregnancy.

For students who are currently working:

If you are an employee, check the terms and conditions of your contract of employment, as you may have contractual maternity rights stated there. The key one is about maternity pay entitlements; money paid while you are off work, preparing for and looking after your baby. If there is no provision in your contract and you satisfy the required continuous employment and earning conditions, you may be entitled to:

- **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)**. The earliest you can be paid is the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth and it is paid for up to 39 weeks in total. If you are not entitled to SMP you may be entitled to receive a Maternity Allowance or Employment Support Allowance instead.
- **Paternity Pay**. Many fathers can benefit from paid time off work once the baby is born. Again, check employment contracts but nevertheless, there is Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay if the employer does not make provision. To check your entitlements log on to www.gov.uk/plan-paternity-leave

For students who are currently claiming welfare benefits:

Sure Start Maternity Grant. You may be eligible for a payment of £500 for your first child, if you are in receipt of Universal Credit (or other applicable benefits). The earliest you can claim this support is from 11 weeks before the baby is due until three months after the baby is born. Please see following link for more information:

www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant

Where can I get further information about any of the above provisions?

For further information contact the Student Welfare Advice Team or see the Government website:

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families

How will my pregnancy impact on my studies, will I need to interrupt?

Please see the following link for information and advice:

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/health-and-wellbeing/pregnancy-maternity-adoption-fostering>

Questions you should think about before making a decision are:

- How will this affect current and future Student Finance England (SFE) funding?
- How will this affect my current MDX fees?
- Who should I inform and how?
- How will this impact on my studies?
- Will I have any Welfare Benefit?
- Entitlements before the baby is born?
- As an international student, will there be further immigration considerations?

As a starting point see Welfare Advice Guide 'Change of Circumstances' and always seek academic and financial advice before finalising decisions and approaching Student Finance England.

Once the baby is born, what extra support can I receive as a student?

The support you receive will depend on many factors but generally, the sorts of things to find out more about is:

Government Support:

Child Benefit, Universal Credit, (subject to an income assessment and the rules of entitlement)

Student Finance England Support:

Childcare Grants if you use registered childcare, Parent Learning Allowances.

NHS Support for health care students on eligible courses

Learning Support Fund

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund

University Support:

Living Cost Funds for unregistered childcare (Please note; funds are limited and will not usually cover all childcare costs, so plan ahead, application usually open in November and close in April)

Your funding body may be able to tell you more about many of these extra funds or you can look at other Welfare Advice Guides at: unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides

Alternatively, look at the Government website:

www.gov.uk/student-finance or

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students

I am on a student visa and due to have a baby. Are there any special immigration rules or procedures I need to know about?

If you are in this situation, it is best to see the International Student Advisors on campus. They can advise you on NHS care as well as Home Office rules relating to dependant visas. Contact intadvice@mdx.ac.uk or call 020 8411 4507

Any questions?

Contact the Middlesex University Student Welfare Advice Team on 020 8411 3008 between 11am - 1pm and 2pm - 4pm Mon to Fri, or submit an enquiry at <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/unihelp> (use the subject Student Welfare Advice in the enquiry) or make an appointment at <https://unihelponline.mdx.ac.uk/#/offlineBookAppointmentService/MzAw//MTY=/>

You can access all of our other Welfare Advice Guides at: unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides

Middlesex University Student Welfare Advice Team have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate. Middlesex University however, cannot be held responsible for any omissions or errors. This publication can only be a guide and is not intended to replace the complex and diverse legislation covered. Statutes and regulations may change during the year without notice. If in doubt seek independent advice.

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