

Parenting and Archaeology – the facts

All the information held in this section can be downloaded in pdf form

An archaeologist who'd like to have a family?

One member (a finds specialist) told us she'd had to take 2 weeks unpaid leave to have her first child; whilst another (an academic) told us she'd received 6 months leave on full pay.

Can a profession sustain this level of disparity and still be considered 'professional'?

Our 2008 survey showed us that many women felt they could not have a family whilst working in the field due to worker mobility, short-term contracts, low pay, and limited maternity rights.

As long as this is the case, women archaeologists are not being treated as professionals.

Select another tab for the facts about maternity/paternity leave and childcare in the UK. Make sure you know your rights **before** falling pregnant – they can come as quite a surprise!

Already pregnant?

****Each year in the UK, 30,000 women still lose their jobs because they are pregnant****

<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/documents/AllianceAgainstPregnancyDiscrimination.pdf>

If you find yourself in this situation with an employer. Free legal advice is available from the Working Families helpline on:

0800 013 0313 or visit <http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk>

If you have been made redundant whilst pregnant or on maternity leave, contact lawyers Leigh, Day and Co. at: <http://www.leighday.co.uk>

You might also contact your union:

Prospect: enquiries@prospect.org.uk

UCU: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1936>

If you work in a large institution, contact your Equalities Officer (normally located within HR).

Or contact us (womeninarchaeology@hotmail.com) and we can negotiate on your behalf.

A difficult 'decision'

Did you know that many employers still don't provide compassionate leave for women who have had to terminate a pregnancy?

If you find yourself in this situation, and don't know what to do, then don't suffer in silence. Contact us (womeninarchaeology@hotmail.com), in full confidence, for support and advice.

Maternity Leave

All the information held in this section can be downloaded in pdf form [Parenting and Archaeology.pdf](#)

Isn't it up to 12 months now? Technically, but have you read the small print?

Ordinary Maternity Leave (6 months)

Women are entitled to 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave following childbirth.

For the first 6 weeks of maternity leave your employer must pay 90% of your wages (providing you have been with your employer for 26 weeks).

6 weeks maternity pay is all your employer is obliged to pay

After this, you are entitled to statutory maternity pay (SMP) of £123.06 per week* for a further 33 weeks.

Equivalent to £5,904 p.a. – £8,822 below the poverty line**

Many employers recognise that new mums cannot survive on this and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) advises employers to *add* to the SMP figure in order to *retain* their female employees.

This typically manifests itself as an entitlement to SMP + 50% of your wage, after 6 weeks and up to 6 months.

But this is *entirely* at your employer's discretion.

Even if your employer only cuts your wage to 50%, for those women who are a household's main wage earner, weaning your baby (and allowing your body time the time it needs to recover) can result in very substantial financial losses - just at the time when financial worries should be the very last thing on your mind!

Taking 6 months maternity leave could lose you several months rent/mortgage repayments:

Take Home Pay	£15,000	£20,000	£25,000
Loss to Income	£ 597	£ 1,616	£ 2,635

***Additional Maternity Leave* (up to 12 months)**

If you take *more than* 6 months maternity leave, you still receive SMP at £492/month (for a further 6 months) but lose the entitlement [sic] to any part of your wage, leaving you – and your new baby – living well below the poverty line.

N.B. After 6 months, your employer is entitled to change your job description upon your return.

So, if you fall pregnant – perhaps especially as a single woman, or if you are the main wage earner in your relationship – then watch out, your 'entitlement' to 12 months maternity leave in the UK is not all it seems.

The BWA recommend that – whatever your situation – you **find out what your employer offers now**, do the maths, and if you're shocked at what you find then get advice, start lobbying, or talk to your union.

****185 days to wean your baby isn't much in a career of 44 years****

More information

There's a really useful Maternity Factsheet here from the LawWorks team:

<http://www.lawworks.org.uk/?id=67&entityType=Document>

Maternity Action information sheets:

<http://www.maternityaction.org.uk/workingparents.html>

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) guide for employers:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?r.s=sc&r.l1=1073858787&r.lc=en&r.l3=1080898273&r.l2=1080898061&type=RESOURCES&itemId=1080903421>

Department of Work and Pensions guide to maternity benefits:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/technical-guidance/ni17a-a-guide-to-maternity/>

Problem?

If you feel that you are being treated unfairly and need advice, you can:

Get free legal advice from the Working Families helpline on:

0800 013 0313 0800 013 0313 0800 013 0313 0800 013 0313 or visit

<http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk>

Contact your union:

Prospect: enquiries@prospect.org.uk

UCU: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1936>

Or contact us (womeninarchaeology@hotmail.com) for support/advice.

* Valid from April 2009

** currently £283.20/week (£14,726 p.a.) after housing is paid for, for a family with two kids.

Paternity Leave

In the UK, a new father is still only entitled to 2 weeks paternity leave (providing they have been with their employer for 26 weeks).

Beyond these two weeks, under current legislation, it is the female parent who is *required* to undertake the prime caring role.

However, after just 6 weeks maternity leave, a female worker receives a drastic cut in wages, meaning that in families where the woman significantly contributes to the household income, or is the main wage earner, financial problems are unavoidable.

As a result, those households that do not conform to a 1950s-style model Under current legislation, women who do not conform to the 'stay-at-home' model (i.e. lone mums, women as main wage earners, or those where the male partner chooses the prime caring role) the female parent can find herself under significant financial pressure to return to work before their child is weaned and earlier than is perhaps good for her health.

More frequently, women find themselves forced into the traditional role of carer. Read on (under 'childcare') for how this can effect a woman's career path.

In other European countries, however, the role of caring for a new baby is negotiable *between*

parents. This allows a father the opportunity for an equal role in his child's upbringing and allows a couple to work out responsibilities depending on their particular situation:

	Leave	Access	Per cent of wage
Norway	18 months	mother/father	70%
Sweden	18 months	mother/father	70%
Germany	14 months	mother/father	66%
UK	6 months	mother (father = 2 weeks only)	90% for 6 weeks; £123.06/week SMP thereafter + discretionary part of your wage (often 50%) A further 6 months of SMP only (£123.06/week)

Nevertheless, UK parenting legislation remains focussed on manouvering women into an outmoded 'stay-at-home' model, where a female worker becomes dependent on a male breadwinner following childbirth; this despite the fact that the employment sector has changed radically in recent decades, with women now making up 46% of the UK workforce (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2009).

British legislation still forces people into specific gender roles based on their sex.

Should I take paternity leave?

According to research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2009):

69% of fathers who take paternity leave say it worked to improve their family life...
...but only 55% of fathers take it.

See this recent news report on problems with paternity leave:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8314622.stm>

Changes to paternity leave from April 2011:

<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=10&cID=967>

Childcare

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Can parents sustain a career in Archaeology?

The IfA report *Profiling the Profession* (2008) recorded that a *disproportionate number* of women were leaving the field in their 30s. The theory is often put forward that women 'choose' to sacrifice their career for a family...

The cost of childcare isn't the only reason that women are leaving the profession, but it does play a substantial role. Here's why:

A nursery place typically costs £38 per day, adding up to an astonishing:

£760 per month

****an amount greater than many rents/mortgage repayments****

If an archaeologist works for 47 weeks of the year, the cost of childcare would total:

£8,930

For many archaeologists this is more than half their wage, leaving working mums trying to survive well below the poverty line.

Combine this with:

A lack of part-time and flexible working practices

A field based on a mobile workforce with low pay and short-term contracts

Legislation that forces women into the prime caring role after the first 2 weeks

And many British women archaeologists are effectively being forced out of the workplace upon parenthood and manoeuvred into the role of unpaid carer, dependent on their partner's wage.

this does not constitute equal opportunities

A career in Archaeology?

Every archaeologist is a professional, yet these are not professional working conditions. BWA maintain that very few women 'choose' to leave their chosen career path lightly.

An archaeologist in her early 30s has seen c. 15 years of training/experience. In losing women to an antiquated parenting framework, we are diminishing our skills base.

**Gender equality legislation is not working
and it's our profession that's suffering**

Join us in helping managers learn about the female employment experience and lobby for equality in parenting legislation.

Help us to effect change in our profession.

Do you have the right to flexible working?

Well, the simple answer to this is no. But you do have the 'right to ask'...

For more information:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Flexibleworking/DG_10029491