

Maternity Certificate (form MAT B1) – Guidance on completion

The Maternity Certificate (MAT B1) is specifically designed for the sole purpose of enabling a pregnant woman to claim Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) from her employer or Maternity Allowance (MA) from Jobcentre Plus. The certificate verifies the fact of pregnancy and confirms the date of the expected week of confinement (EWC). It also confirms the actual date of birth in cases where the child is born early.

Rules governing the completion of form MAT B1

Doctors or registered midwives are required to issue, free of charge, Maternity Certificates (form MAT B1), to their patient who is pregnant and for whom they provide clinical care.

The maternity certificate should be completed in ink or other indelible substance.

You should also ensure that your patient's name is included on the MAT B1.

To validate the certificate midwives must include their UKCC Personal Identification number and the expiry date of registration with UKCC (which is now the NMC Personal Identification number and the expiry date of registration with NMC).

Part A

This part must be completed when you are issuing the certificate before confinement.

It is particularly important that certificates are issued only when you are satisfied that your patient is in fact pregnant. Certificates must not be issued more than 20 weeks before the expected week of confinement.

You should estimate as accurately as possible the date the woman is expected to be confined, and enter this date in Part A of the certificate. The qualifying conditions and payment periods of both Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance (MA) are based on this date.

Part B

This part must be completed when you are issuing the certificate after confinement.

You should enter the date of birth at Part B and it is important that the date in the week the woman was expected to be confined should also be shown in all cases. Although your patient may not have applied for SMP or MA before confinement, her entitlement will still depend on the expected date of confinement. The certificate may be given by a doctor or a registered midwife who attended the patient in connection with her confinement.

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After a maternity certificate has been issued to a woman, no further maternity certificate based on the same examination can be issued other than a maternity certificate which is a replacement of an original which has been lost or mislaid in this case it must be clearly marked “duplicate”.

Background notes

Pregnant working women and those recently employed can usually get Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) from their employer or state Maternity Allowance (MA) through Jobcentre Plus.

SMP or MA is paid for a maximum of 39 weeks, starting, at the earliest, 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Confinement (EWC) and, at the latest, the day following the baby's birth. Within these limits working women can choose when to start receiving SMP or MA. Where the woman gives birth before the 11th week of her expected week of confinement or before the start of her payment period, SMP and MA will start from the day following the birth.

If a woman is absent from work wholly or partly because of her pregnancy in the four weeks before the EWC, then SMP or MA will start automatically on the day following the first complete day she is first absent from work because of her pregnancy in those four weeks.

SMP is payable to those women who have been employed by their employer for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the week in which the baby is due. In addition, their average weekly earnings must be at least equal to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contribution purposes.

MA is a benefit paid by Jobcentre Plus to pregnant women who cannot get SMP, the self-employed and recently employed. To qualify, a woman must have been employed and/or self-employed for at least 26 weeks in the test period – (this is the 66 week period ending with the week before the EWC). The 26 weeks do not have to be in a row and part weeks count towards the 26 weeks. In addition, a woman must have average weekly earnings of at least £30 a week in any 13 weeks in the test period.

Normally, to avoid any loss of entitlement, an application for SMP or MA should be made before the birth. There is no claim form for SMP, a woman just needs to notify her employer that she wants to get SMP at least 28 days before it is due to start. She must also give her employer her maternity certificate (MAT B1).

Claim forms for MA are available from the Jobcentre Plus claim-line (0800 055 6688, textphone 0800 023 4888), from antenatal clinic, or from GOV.UK – www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance

For detailed information on Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance please see **Leaflet NI17A – A guide to Maternity Benefits** available on the Department for Work and Pensions website – www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/technical-guidance/ni17a-a-guide-to-maternity/

Employment and Support Allowance

If a woman is not entitled to SMP or MA she may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). If a woman makes a claim for MA and does not qualify, she will automatically be considered for ESA as an alternative payment. The qualifying conditions for ESA are different from that used to determine MA.

ESA depends upon the payment of National Insurance contributions in the relevant income tax years. ESA can be paid for 6 weeks before the expected week of confinement and for 14 days after the baby is born, subject to satisfying the conditions of entitlement for ESA. A woman's maternity certificate (MATB1) is accepted as evidence of having limited capability for work for ESA for this period.

Sure Start Maternity Grant

The Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG) is available to low income families with expenses associated with having a new baby. To make a claim for SSMG, parents will be required to provide evidence that they have received advice from a health professional on appropriate health topics such as the needs of the child and, where the grant is claimed before confinement, maternal health. A Maternity Certificate (form MAT B1) is not necessary for customers to make a claim for SSMG.

As a medical practitioner, you may be asked to provide advice about the expected week of confinement, and where appropriate the child's date of birth, and to confirm that your patient has received advice on aspects of maternal or child health. The precise nature of the advice provided is a matter for you but such advice will certainly be encompassed by current best clinical practice in maternal and child health care.

More information about the benefits available during pregnancy can be found on GOV.UK –

www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance

Form MAT B1 specimen

MAT B1

TO THE DOCTOR OR MIDWIFE – Please fill in this form in ink.

Name of patient

Part A

Fill in this part if you are giving the certificate **before** the confinement.

Do not fill this in more than 20 weeks before the week when the baby is expected.

I certify that I examined you on the date given below. In my opinion you can expect to have your baby in the week that includes/...../.....

Week means a period of 7 days starting on a Sunday and ending on a Saturday.

Date of examination/...../.....

Date of signing/...../.....

Signature

Part B

Fill in this part if you are giving the certificate **after** the confinement.

I certify that I attended you in connection with the birth which took place on/...../..... when you were delivered of a child [] children.

In my opinion your baby was expected in the week that includes/...../.....

Registered midwives

Please give your UKCC Personal Identification Number and the expiry date of your registration with the UKCC.

Doctors

Please stamp your name and address here if the form has not been stamped by the Health Authority in whose medical list you are included.

TO THE PATIENT

Please read the notes on the back of this form ►

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