

'Alarmingly High' Number of New and Expectant parents are losing their job or facing unfair treatment at work

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The number of new and expectant parents losing their job or facing unfair treatment at work is “alarmingly high” - the [TUC](#) warns.

The warning comes as new TUC polling reveals that more than 1 in 7 women (14%) who have children or are expecting a child have lost a job - or felt forced to leave a job due to pregnancy or becoming a parent.

The reasons for being pushed out of work include:

- Working hours, role or conditions changed in a way that made it difficult to continue to work.
- Negative treatment or pressure.
- Inability to secure flexible working.
- Being selected for redundancy with the suspicion it was related to pregnancy or becoming a new parent.

Unfair treatment at work

Beyond being forced out of work, new and expectant parents also reported unfair treatment at an “alarmingly high rate”.

More than 1 in 5 women (21%) and 1 in 10 men (14%) reported experiencing unfair treatment at work due to expecting or having children.

For them, unfair treatment came in different forms:

- 17% received unpleasant comments from their employer and/or colleagues.
- 16% were given unsuitable work or workloads.
- 16% were denied access to flexible working.
- 14% experienced bullying by their line manager.
- 13% failed to gain a promotion they felt they deserved.

This unfair treatment happened throughout the pregnancy, during leave and/or on returning to work.

Afraid to take action

Of those who faced unfair treatment, were dismissed or felt forced to leave their job, 4 in 10 (37%) did not take any action.

The main reasons given for not taking action include:

- 42% found taking action to be too stressful.
- 28% did not know where to get advice and support.
- 26% did not know that their experience might be unfair or unlawful treatment.

“Pervasive culture of mistreatment”

The TUC says the findings highlighted a “pervasive culture of mistreatment” of new and expectant parents across UK workplaces.

The Employment Rights Act, which received royal assent just before Christmas, will give stronger rights at work to expectant and new parents.

These include stronger dismissal protection for pregnant women and new mothers returning from Maternity Leave.

The government is consulting on how these provisions will work in practice and is committed to introducing new protection in 2027.

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said: “Having a baby should be a moment of joy. But a pervasive culture of mistreatment at work is robbing too many parents of that experience. Some are even being forced out of their jobs.

“Change can’t come soon enough. The Employment Rights Act will deliver long-overdue protections for families across the country. Government must now ensure that these new rights are introduced in full as quickly as possible”