

# PGP in the workplace:

## Information for employers



Registered charity no. 1100373



### Pelvic girdle pain (PGP) affects one in five pregnant women

PGP causes pain on movement, which can result in having to use crutches or a wheelchair. This can lead to a loss of independence.

This leaflet aims to provide information to help you support women with PGP by making adjustments in the workplace. With reasonable changes most women can be supported to continue to work.

Symptoms can vary in severity on a daily basis: a woman may appear fine one day, and be quite immobile the next.

### How you can help your employee

- Have regular discussions with her, identifying tasks with which she is struggling and working to make reasonable adjustments; this will help her continue to work for longer, and speed her recovery.
- Designate physical tasks to colleagues in advance, so she does not need to constantly ask for help; this can make it easier for her to do her job.
- Assess with your employee what impact PGP is having on day-to-day work, including posture, walking, sitting at a computer and using facilities at work. Look at all tasks including the use of stairs, etc.
- Agree to time off for treatment: pregnant women are entitled to time off for maternity appointments, and this includes manual therapy for PGP.
- If your employee has been off work, make a plan with her about her return which could include working from home, a phased return or perhaps discussing a change in her role or tasks.

### What is pelvic girdle pain?

- it's a mechanical joint problem related to pregnancy and birth
- it's where the pelvic joints become stiff and stuck making walking sitting climbing stairs and other day-to-day activities painful and difficult
- it can start at any time during or after pregnancy
- it varies in severity between women and between pregnancies to the extent that some women need to use crutches or a wheelchair to remain mobile
- it usually responds very well to manual treatment, particularly if treated soon after symptoms start.

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*The Pelvic Partnership is run by volunteers and aims to give support and information about Pelvic Girdle Pain (PGP) / Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction (SPD), pregnancy-related pelvic joint pain.*

### Why is prompt treatment important?

Manual therapy such as physiotherapy/osteopathy or chiropractic treatment is safe and effective at any stage in pregnancy. Usually the sooner treatment starts, the sooner the pain will decrease, enabling your member of staff to continue working or return to work sooner. The symptoms and outcomes do vary between women, but most women will benefit from treatment. Pregnant women are entitled to time off for maternity appointments, and this includes therapy for PGP. Encourage your employee to seek treatment as soon as possible.

### Some practical solutions

*A little bit of imagination and goodwill can sort out most difficulties*

Consider **home-working** with fewer trips to the office/base.

**Sitting:** avoid the need for the employee to sit for long periods, try extra cushions or a different chair; encourage a change of position regularly. Make a space available for lying down if possible. Suggest the employee avoids sitting on the floor if this is painful.

**Walking:** base meetings around the individual's location.

**Climbing stairs:** arrange work on the same level where possible.

**Standing:** try offering a perching stool to the employee and suggest she has regular breaks from standing.

**Lifting and carrying:** as for all pregnant women, this should be avoided and such tasks should be allocated to other employees.

**Driving:** avoid the need for the individual to drive long distances where possible; consider access to an automatic car if severe symptoms persist.



### Effects of chronic pain

Living with chronic pain can be very tiring. It may be necessary to look at incorporating regular breaks or flexible working hours for the employee.

### Further information

- You can find more information about PGP at [www.pelvicpartnership.org.uk](http://www.pelvicpartnership.org.uk)
- The Citizen's advice bureau can give up-to-date employment law advice so that you and your employee are both fully aware of your rights and responsibilities.
- Further information regarding the Equality Act 2010 is available at [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport)