‘Keeping in Touch’ (KIT) days are a new provision under the Work and Families Act 2006 particularly intended to help employees on maternity leave with the process of resuming work and to enable employers to maintain better contact and encourage more open communication with women on maternity leave.

Employees are encouraged to discuss the issue of KIT days with their manager before they commence maternity leave so that there is a clear understanding of their aspirations and expectations and those of their manager.

Key points:

- These days are optional and the decision to undertake a KIT day must be made by agreement between the employee and the employer (there are no rights for either the employer or the employee to require such days).

- There can be up to 10 such KIT days during the period of maternity leave.

- The type of work can be anything that the employee would normally do and be paid for, and could include attendance on training courses and at conferences.

- Employees will not be paid for attending KIT days, nor will it be possible for the University to meet any additional childcare costs. However, for each KIT day, the employee’s physical return to work will be deferred by one day. For example, if she were due to return to work on Monday 2 April and worked 5 KIT days, for payroll purposes she would be treated as returning to work on Monday 2 April, but would not physically return until Monday 9 April.

- If, however, KIT days occur during the period when the employee is receiving Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), payment of SMP will not be affected.

- Any work carried out on any day will count as one full day.

By maintaining a minimal, but regular, presence during maternity leave - bearing in mind there is no obligation for the employee to do so - Keeping in Touch Days can offer real benefit to the University.

Potential benefits of KIT days:

- Important projects can benefit from employees with valued skill (for example, the end of a project with which the employee has been intimately involved may require her attendance)

- Training and development can continue during maternity leave (for example, a training course could take place during the maternity leave that might be important to the employee’s role)

- Staff can stay on top of important workplace issues.

Process:
On the employee’s final KIT day, the PD25 form should be completed with their line manager and sent to the Personnel Administration Team.