# 1. Parental leave and pay: Supporting parents and achieving equality Response form

The consultation is available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/good-work-plan-proposals-to-support-families](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fconsultations%2Fgood-work-plan-proposals-to-support-families&data=02%7C01%7CLaurissa.Miles%40beis.gov.uk%7Ce3cb1dd018e34463a27708d70b7f76ef%7Ccbac700502c143ebb497e6492d1b2dd8%7C0%7C0%7C636990515237209068&sdata=gFCffIHWx9skKn3id6D2thdqY9WgmonTkeHoHerCs7E%3D&reserved=0)

The closing date for responses is: 29November 2019

Please return completed forms to:

Team: Family-related Leave and Pay Team
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Postal address: 1st Floor Spur, 1 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, SE24 0DN

Tel: 020 7215 5000
Email: supportingfamiliesconsultation@beis.gov.uk

## Personal / Confidential information

Please be aware that we intend to publish a summary of all responses to this consultation.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes. Please see the consultation document for further information.

If you want information, including personal data, that you provide to be treated as confidential, please explain to us below why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we shall take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

I want my response to be treated as confidential [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

## About You

Name:
Organisation (if applicable):
Address:

|  | Respondent type |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Business representative organisation/trade body |
|[ ]  Individual |
|[ ]  Legal representative |
|[ ]  Large business (over 250 staff) |
|[ ]  Medium business (50 to 250 staff) |
|[ ]  Micro business (up to 9 staff) |
|[ ]  Small business (10 to 49 staff) |
|[ ]  Trade union or staff association |
|[ ]  Other (please describe) |

|  | If you are an individual, are you: |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Employed |
|[ ]  Self-employed |
|[ ]  Unemployed |
|[ ]  Retired |
|[ ]  Not looking for work |
|[ ]  other |

|  | If you are an employer, how would you classify your organisation? |
| --- | --- |
| [ ]  | Private sector |
|[ ]  Public sector |
|[ ]  Charity/Voluntary sector |
|[ ]  Other (please specify) |

Further information

Parental leave factors which support parents to combine work with childcare responsibilities

There are a range of variables which could potentially be leveraged:

* The length of leave and when it can be taken (e.g. only in the first year or over the lifetime of the child);
* The rate of pay (which can vary over the leave period);
* Whether leave is transferrable between parents or given on a ‘use it or lose it’ basis;
* Whether the parental leave can be taken flexibly (e.g. in days or half-days; in blocks separated by periods at work; and whether it can be stopped and re-started);
* Who the leave and pay applies to (e.g. just employees or all working parents); and
* Whether parents can take time off work together, sequentially or both.

Making the right trade-offs and choices to support families

Reforming one or more parental leave and pay policies may necessitate trade-offs around:

* How entitlements to leave and/or pay are split between parents;
* Balancing flexibility and choice for families and incentivising parental behaviours (e.g. solo childcare by fathers);
* Creating more rules and incentives to determine how leave is taken and shared, versus simplicity for parents to navigate the system and make choices;
* Giving parents the flexibility to take leave when it suits them and giving their employers and co-workers certainty;
* How the costs of parental leave and pay are shared between families, employers and the Government;
* How much support is provided at the time of the birth versus giving parents opportunities to take parental leave when their child is older;
* How support is distributed across families – and whether the generosity of support should vary according to a family’s income;
* How the costs are distributed across types of employers – including, the relative support provided to SMEs and large employers;
* How employers who provide enhanced contractual leave and pay would respond to Government enhancing family-related statutory pay (e.g. would they extend the period of contractual leave and pay or re-cycle the savings?); and
* The level of support offered to families with different characteristics.

Section 1: Paternity leave and pay

This section seeks views on options for changing the different variables within paternity leave and pay, and the trade-offs and choices involved.

We are seeking views on the following questions:

Question 1:

**What emphasis should be placed on enhancing Statutory Paternity Pay versus the length of Paternity Leave available?**

[ ]  Longer period of leave at a lower rate of pay

[ ]  Shorter period of leave with a higher rate of pay

**Please provide reasons for your answer below**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

**Policy objectives**

Parental leave and pay policies give employed parents a right to time off work in the first year and subsequently. They are supplemented by a range of employment rights and protections which are intended to prevent employers from discriminating against parents or treating them unfairly because they have been absent from work on parental leave. Together, these rights and protections are intended to:

* Enable women to prepare for and recover from birth;
* Facilitate women returning to work and staying in work (i.e. boost female participation in the labour market);
* Give working families more choice and flexibility;
* Increase paternal involvement in childcare;
* Close the employment and gender pay gaps;
* Prevent pregnancy and maternity discrimination;
* Prevent discrimination against parents who take or seek to take parental leave; and
* Minimise the burdens on business.

**Question 2: What impact would changing either leave or pay have on our policy objectives?**

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 3: How should the costs of providing Paternity Leave and Pay be apportioned between Government, employers and parents?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 4: Could enhancing Statutory Paternity Pay and extending Paternity Leave result in differential impacts across families with different characteristics (e.g. families from different socio-economic groups or cultural backgrounds)?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 5: Should support vary according to family characteristics, including income levels? For example, should there be a cap on Statutory Paternity Pay for high earners?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 6: Should the level of reimbursement for employers vary according to their size (as now)?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 7: How might businesses that already provide enhanced Paternity Pay respond to any enhancement to Statutory Paternity Pay? For example, would they extend the period of contractual leave and pay?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 8: How should the timing of when leave can be taken be balanced between giving families choice and flexibility, and incentivising particular parental behaviours? For example, should fathers/partners be able to take leave and pay at any point in the first year or be required to take leave when the mother has returned to work to incentivise solo parenting?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 9: How should we balance giving fathers/partners flexibility and choice (e.g. to take paternity leave in blocks) with the needs of employers and co-workers for certainty around when the father/partner is likely to be off work?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Section 2: Shared parental leave and pay

This section seeks views on shared parental leave and pay: how it meets our objectives, options for changing the different variables and the trade-offs and choices involved.

We are seeking views on the following questions:

Question 10: What aspects of the current Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme are most successful, and which are most in need of reform? Please give reasons for your answer.

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 11: Should there be a dedicated pot of leave and pay for each parent within the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 12: Should mothers continue to be the ‘gatekeeper’ for the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 13: Should there be an element of pay enhancement in the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

If so, how should the cost of any enhancement be apportioned between the Government, employers and parents?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 14: Could enhancing Statutory Shared Parental Pay and/or giving fathers access to ‘use it or lose it’ leave through the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme result in differential impacts across families with different characteristics (e.g. families from different socio-economic groups or cultural backgrounds)?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 15: Should support vary according to family characteristics, including income levels?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 16: How should any enhancement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay interact with the level of statutory pay available under paternity and maternity provisions, in particular how should Government prioritise the different entitlements in terms of providing enhanced pay?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 17: How might businesses that already provide enhanced Shared Parental Pay respond to any enhancement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay? For example, would they extend the period of contractual leave and pay?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Section 3: Maternity leave and pay

This section seeks views on the implications for maternity leave and pay of potential reforms to paternity leave or shared parental leave.

We are seeking views on the following questions:

Question 18: Given your views on priorities for reform of Paternity Leave or Shared Parental Leave, are there any implications for maternity arrangements including:

1. The length of Maternity Leave?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. The level and extent of Statutory Maternity Pay

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. The current inflexibility as to when Maternity Leave can be taken?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

### Section 4: Parental leave for parents of older children

This section seeks views on parental leave for parents of older children: how it meets our objectives, the balance between leave and pay for this set of parents, and options for reform.

We are seeking your views on the following questions:

Question 19: What aspects of the current arrangements for parental leave (which can be taken up to and including the child’s 18th birthday) are most successful, and which are most in need of reform? Please give a reason for your answer.

Most Successful:

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Most in need of reform:

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Please give your reasoning below:

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 20: How should the Government balance the length of leave for parents of older children with the level of pay in order to incentivise take up?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 21: Are there any other reforms to parental leave for older children that would support the Government’s wider goals for parental leave policies?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Section 5: Towards a comprehensive suite of parental leave policies

This section seeks views on the high-level options and challenges of potential reforms to parental leave and pay.

We are seeking your views on the following questions:

Question 22: Do you agree with the Government’s objectives for parental leave and pay policies? (Objectives can be found in section 1)

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not sure [ ]

Please give your reasons

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 23: Do you think the Government should consider a more radical change – potentially moving to a single ‘family’ set of leave entitlements, or seek to reform the existing entitlements?

Move to single family set of leave entitlements [ ]

Seek to reform the existing entitlements [ ]

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 24: If we were to move to a new model for parental leave and pay, which areas for reform are most important? Please give a reason for your answer. In particular:

1. Is more support needed for families around the time of the birth of a child or later, when the child is older?

Around Birth [ ]  Later [ ]  Don’t know [ ]

Please give your reasons

Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. Should any incentives for fathers to take more responsibility for childcare focus on: a specific paternity entitlement; changes to the Shared Parental Leave and Pay scheme; or parental leave for older children?

Paternity entitlement ☐

Shared Parental leave and parental leave ☐

Don’t know ☐

Please give your reasons:

 Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. Should the Government give greater priority to the length of leave available or to the pay enhancements available?

Length ☐ Pay enhancements ☐ Don’t know ☐

Please give your reasons:

Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. Should support be directed to any particular groups of families? If so which groups, and how?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

1. How should the costs of any reforms fall between families, the Government and business? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 25: Should Government prioritise reform of parental leave policies over other Government policies which support parents to combine work with family life?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Question 26: If you consider that the Government should prioritise reform of parental leave and pay policies, which policies are most important and why?

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Thank you for your views on this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply [ ]

At BEIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations, and your views are valuable to us. Would you be happy for us to contact you again from time to time either for research or about other consultations?

[ ] Yes [ ] No