



HM Government

CONSULTATION ON MODERN WORKPLACES

Modern Workplaces Consultation - Government Response - Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on Flexible Parental Leave and Flexible Working

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Modern Workplaces - Equality Impact Assessment

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) analyses the impact of the flexible parental leave policy being proposed on protected groups. In 2011, the Modern Workplaces Consultation proposed a set of policies to change the existing maternity and paternity pay and leave system. The consultation received 273 responses. The policy has been developed in light of the responses received during the consultation. We have also included the right to request flexible working in the analysis as this formed part of the proposed changes to Modern Workplaces Consultation.

This document seeks to further give due regard to if, how and to what extent this policy will impact upon protected characteristics, as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

We will be assessing the policy against the protected characteristics of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Race and Nationality
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Maternity and Pregnancy

We have used a large variety of sources to inform the EqIA: The Modern Workplaces consultation responses; interviews with representative organisations; longitudinal research conducted by government, such as 'The Maternity and Paternity Rights and Women Returners Survey 2009/2010' published by BIS and DWP; and other research literature. Please see the bibliography for details on page 19.

The current system of maternity, paternity and parental leave is inflexible; it is gender-biased and does not support shared parenting. A substantial body of research suggests that shared parenting provides a host of benefits to the wellbeing of children¹. The vast disparity in the amount of leave available to mothers and fathers also maintains a gender imbalance in attachment to, and position in the labour market. The gender pay gap in median earnings between men and women is 10.2%² and we know part of this is associated with women

¹ International studies show that in countries where parental leave is provided, fathers take more leave. See case study in Sweden for example; International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research, Peter Moss, Institute of Education University of London, P.229

² The consultation on Modern Workplaces is available at:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/employment-matters/docs/c/11-699-3>

taking time out of the workplace to care for children after pregnancy. Mothers who choose to return to work cannot go back onto maternity leave at a later date. Employees are unable to choose a more flexible pattern of leave that might better suit both them and their employer. Therefore the current system cannot be described as business or employee friendly and does little to improve women's position and attachment to the labour market.

The Current System

Maternity Leave and Pay

All employed women have a day-one right to take up maternity leave (they do not need to have worked for an employer for a set period of time to be entitled). They may also be entitled to either statutory maternity pay (SMP) or maternity allowance (MA) depending on their employment history:

- Statutory maternity leave (SML) is up to 52 weeks in length
- Statutory maternity pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. It is paid by the employer with the majority of the cost subsequently reimbursed by the state. The first six weeks of SMP are paid at 90% of the mother's weekly salary, and the subsequent 33 weeks are paid at the lesser of 90% of salary or a flat rate of £135.45 per week for the year 2012/13.
- Maternity allowance is paid at the lesser of 90% of a woman's average weekly salary or £135.45 per week for up to 39 weeks. It is paid directly by the state to mothers who do not qualify for SMP but who do meet other earnings requirement (self-employed; low paid; women with a recent attachment to the labour market).
- Unpaid parental leave: employed parents with a year's qualifying service with their employer are entitled to up to 13 weeks' unpaid leave to look after their child. Leave is capped at 4 weeks per year. Leave can be taken up to the child's 5th birthday or in the case of a disabled child, up to the child's 18th birthday.

Paternity Leave and Pay

To be eligible for ordinary statutory paternity leave and statutory paternity pay (SPP) a father (or mother's partner) must have completed 26 weeks' service with his (or her) employer, by the 15th week before the week the baby is due and continue to work for the same employer up to the date the child is born. Eligible fathers (or a mother's partner) also have access to additional paternity leave, which is a maximum of 26 weeks and can only start 20 weeks after the birth of the child, providing the mother has returned to work.

The rights to paternity leave and SPP allow an eligible employee to take paid leave to care for the baby, or to support the mother following birth. During this time he may be entitled to SPP.

- An employed father, husband, civil partner or partner of the mother or a primary adopter can be eligible.
- Qualifying conditions - continuously employed for a minimum of 26 weeks during the 15th week before the mother is expected to give birth or in the case of an adopter being notified the date on which they are matched with their child.
- Statutory paternity pay - two weeks paid at the lesser of 90% of their salary or a flat rate of £135.45 per week (2012/13 figures³).
- Additional paternity leave (APL) – up to 26 weeks' leave to care for their child during the first year of the child's life.
- Additional statutory paternity pay (ASPP) may be paid if the father meets the qualifying criteria whilst on APL. ASPP is paid at the lesser of 90% of salary or a flat rate of £135.45 per week. No ASPP will be paid for APL taken after the mother's 39 week maternity pay period has ended.

The New System

Flexible Parental Leave

The aim of the flexible parental leave (FPL) policy is to provide a new system that will achieve a number of key objectives:

- More choice and flexibility for parents in how they care for their child in the first year.
- Both parents retain a strong link to the labour market.
- Encouraging more fathers to play a greater caring role in the first year of a child's life by increasing flexibility to enable employers and employees to reach agreement on how best to manage their work and domestic responsibilities without state interference.

The Modern Workplaces package will contain the following elements:

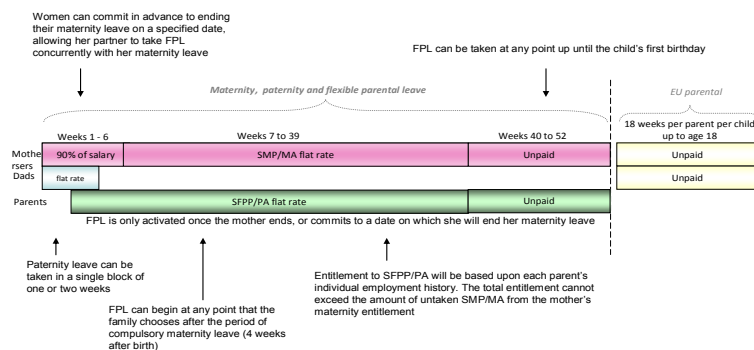
- The right to unpaid time off for fathers to attend 2 antenatal appointments;
- All mothers maintain access to 52 weeks of maternity leave, 39 of which are paid;
- If both parents meet the eligibility criteria, once the mother returns to work or specifies a date on which her maternity leave will end, both parents will

³ This rate is reviewed every year in line with Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

become entitled to the flexible parental system. The maximum amount of flexible parental leave available will be the balance of the untaken maternity leave. The balance of untaken pay will also become available to both parents to use if they are eligible;

- The qualifying period for adoption leave will be aligned with maternity leave to make statutory adoption leave (SAL) a 'day 1' right and statutory adoption pay (SAP) will be enhanced to 90% of salary for the first 6 weeks;
- Unpaid leave will be increased from the current 13 weeks to 18 weeks for each parent, per child, and will be available to parents of children up to the age of 18;
- Extension to the Right to Request Flexible Working to all employees.

Flexible Parental Leave system



Analysis of individual elements of the proposal

1. Ante-natal appointments: Statutory right for fathers to take unpaid leave to attend two ante-natal appointments. Fathers do not currently have a statutory right to leave to attend antenatal appointments. Mothers have a statutory right to paid leave to attend all antenatal appointments.

The statutory right to leave to attend two antenatal appointments is a crucial part of our aim to show that shared parenting is important by getting fathers involved from the earliest stages of pregnancy. 83% of consultation respondents said that fathers should be entitled to take time off for antenatal appointments. 51% of consultation respondents agreed that two antenatal appointments were appropriate. 79% of consultation respondents agreed that there should be a separate entitlement to attend two antenatal appointments.

Age

We do not anticipate that this protected characteristic will be adversely affected and there were no consultation respondents who responded to this proposal to highlight the needs of this protected characteristic.

Disability

Parents of babies who are born with a disability sometimes learn about this for the first time during an antenatal scan. Giving fathers the right to time off to attend antenatal appointments may therefore have a positive impact in this area, since they can offer support to the mother in such situations, as well as potentially offering a greater degree of support if there are complications during the pregnancy. Increasing the involvement of fathers may, on occasions, also offer health professionals a greater opportunity to gather information on the father's medical history.

Gender

The right to time off to attend ante-natal appointments will be available to the fathers of the unborn child and the mother's partner, including her husband, civil partner or partner (of either sex). The right is not, consequently, gender specific. We anticipate that it will create a positive benefit, specifically in terms of encouraging partners to become more involved in parenting by getting them involved earlier in the pregnancy. A third of consultation respondents said that this proposal will encourage gender equality and that it acknowledges the importance of the second parent. It also envisaged that this policy will have a positive impact on mothers, as the early support of the father or the mother's partner in pregnancy will increase the likelihood of their continued involvement throughout the child's life.

Religion/belief

We anticipate that this proposal will not have a negative impact upon this protected characteristic. One particular religious group responded that this specific policy would help them practice their religion more easily as their religion states specifically that men should play an active role as a father.

Gender reassignment

We do not anticipate that people with this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic and there were no consultation respondents who responded to this proposal to highlight specific needs of this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation

We anticipate that the outcome for this protected characteristic will be different for parents according to their sexual orientation unless they are having a child through surrogacy or adoption. The eligibility criteria for this policy means the right should accrue to an employee who:

- is (or believes himself to be) the biological father of the child that the pregnant woman is carrying;
- is the pregnant woman's husband or partner or civil partner;
- commissioning parents in a surrogacy who intend to apply for a parental order.

The outcome for homosexual couples will depend on the circumstances of the birth. In the situation where one partner is genetically linked to the child and the couple are not intending to apply for a parental order. The genetically linked partner will be entitled to attend the two antenatal appointments. The remaining parent, who is not genetically linked to the baby, will not have a statutory right to attend the two antenatal appointments. However where a homosexual couple are commissioning a child through surrogacy and are intending to apply for a parental order, both parents will have the statutory right to attend two antenatal appointments. Therefore, the eligibility criteria for this policy may produce a different outcome for homosexual couples.

Maternity and Pregnancy

The consultation response to this proposal was generally positive. 89% of consultation respondents said that time off to attend two ante-natal appointments was a reasonable number as it would allow fathers to attend the two major scans that usually happen in the beginning and middle of the pregnancy.

One group representing this protected characteristic stated that the presence of the father at antenatal appointments is important for doctors to gather the information about the family and identify individuals in need of extra support, as well as helping the father develop his own role in the family. Some respondents suggested that complicated pregnancies would require the father to attend more

antenatal appointments. In such cases, the father will be able to take the time off using other leave arrangements. We believe this is a proportionate approach.

It is important to emphasise that whilst this policy will facilitate the right to time off work will facilitate the attendance of fathers at antenatal appointments, the choice of who attends the appointments will remain entirely in the hands of the woman. This is to protect the needs of vulnerable women.

Race and Nationality

In terms of absolute numbers, there are more white fathers who are fathers of children under the age of one (see table below). Therefore, there will be a higher number of white men who have the statutory right to unpaid leave to attend two ante-natal appointments. We therefore anticipate that a higher number of white fathers will attend the two ante-natal appointments. However, when considered as a proportion of the population more Asian and black or black British men are fathers (see table below). Therefore a higher proportion of Asian men and black or black British men will have the right to unpaid leave to attend two ante-natal appointments. We anticipate that this will lead to a higher take-up rate by this group.

There were no consultation respondents representing race and nationality who responded to this proposal.

	Total Number of Male employees	Number of male employees with child under age of 1	Male employees with child under age of 1 as proportion of total male employees
White	10,979,549	410,251	3.7%
Mixed/multiple ethnicities	103,163	*	*
Asian or Asian British	754,634	60,910	8.1%
Black or Black British	290,276	18,299	6.3%
Chinese	53,088	*	*
Other ethnic group	147,197	*	*
Total	12,327,907	505,118	4.1%
* Table cells with a weighted count of less than 10,000 have been suppressed, as these are not statistically robust. Source: Labour Force Survey, Q3 2011. Great Britain data only			

2. Maternity leave and pay: 52 weeks' maternity leave of which 39 may be paid. The first six weeks are paid at 90% of salary. The subsequent 33 weeks are paid at the lesser of 90% of salary or the standard rate (£135.45 for 2012-13).

The new FPL policy proposes that if woman decides to end her maternity leave at any point after the compulsory health and safety period (2 weeks for office workers or 4 weeks for factory/ manual workers), both parents will be entitled to access the flexible parental system if they are eligible to do so. To end her maternity leave, a woman will need to either return to work or to notify the date on which she will end her maternity leave.

Age

We do not anticipate that this proposal will have any negative impact to this protected characteristic.

Disability

We predict that this change will impact positively upon families with disabled children. We anticipate that parents with this protected characteristic will have a greater need for flexibility in taking time out of the workplace to look after the baby. As this type of flexibility is not available under the current system, this new policy will bring a positive benefit to this protected characteristic. There were no consultation respondents representing disabled people who had commented on this change.

Gender

We anticipate that this specific proposal will have a positive impact on gender by enabling women to better balance childcare with work commitments. Under the current system, if a woman decides to return to work before her maternity leave ends and subsequently changes her mind, her statutory maternity leave stops and cannot be started again⁴. Under the new FPL system, eligible women can take a period of FPL after their maternity leave in a pattern that helps the family best balance work and domestic commitments

Fathers, or the mother's partner, will benefit too, as if they are eligible, they will have access to flexible parental leave.

⁴ Excluding her entitlement of 10 Keeping In Touch days.

Gender reassignment

There were no consultation respondents representing gender reassignment who had commented on this change.

Race and Nationality

We do not predict that this change will impact upon people with this protected characteristic. We will be maintaining the current eligibility criteria for overseas adopters.

Religion and Belief

We do not predict that this change will impact upon people who have a particular religious belief any differently to those who do not have a religious belief or belong to a different religion. One religious group opposed the concept of mothers working after giving birth which they believed contradicts their religious beliefs.

Sexual Orientation

We predict that this policy will have the same impact on same sex couples as for heterosexual couples.

Maternity and Pregnancy

We predict that this policy will have a positive impact on mothers as it provides greater flexibility and the opportunity for them to tailor their maternity period to suit their needs.

Some consultation respondents articulated a concern with the original proposal for a period of 18 weeks maternity leave on the grounds that it would roll back the provision available to women at the time of the implementation of the original Pregnant Workers Directive.

We were clear that our original proposal was compliant with the Pregnant Workers Directive, but, to allay the concerns about the perception of a shorter maternity leave period, we revised our proposal so that women can maintain access to 52 weeks, if they so wish.

Another concern included the possible impact of the original proposal on the occupational maternity schemes currently available. Again, whilst we were clear that our original proposal was legally robust, we have changed the proposal so that it is absolutely clear that employers do not need to amend their occupational maternity schemes.

Therefore, we would expect that employers who are already offering occupational maternity and paternity schemes to keep such provisions for their employees with some employers tailoring the extra pay according to when their employees take that leave.

3. Flexible Leave and Pay: An eligible woman can end her maternity leave if she so wishes at any time after the minimum statutory period after birth (2 weeks for office workers or 4 weeks for factory/ manual workers). Any untaken leave and pay from her maternity leave entitlement will become available to both parents (or the woman and her partner) to use as FPL if they are entitled to do so. Depending on the parents' employment history, they may also be entitled to statutory flexible parental pay whilst absent from work on FPL. This entitlement will not exceed the amount of untaken weeks of SMP or MA. The parents will need to decide between them how to share the leave and pay entitlement.

This means that either the mother or the father (or mother's partner) can take FPL according to their needs and preferences. Furthermore, they will be able to stop and start the leave as suits them best. For example, the mother may take the first half of FPL and the father may choose to take the remaining half. 91% of all consultation respondents agreed that parental leave and pay should be available to mothers and fathers on an equal basis. 81% of all consultation respondents agreed with our policy intent to make this parental leave as flexible as possible.

Age

As the purpose of the flexible parental leave policy is to provide maternity, paternity and parental leave for parents, a large majority of eligible parents will be people who are of childbearing age. However, this policy also benefits parents who have chosen to delay having children and couples who may have chosen to adopt or become surrogate parents later on in life.

Disability

We believe that this policy will have a positive impact upon families where the parents or the children have a disability. Evidence shows that in 2009/10⁵ that more than a quarter of fathers said they had no access to family leave arrangements. This proposal may benefit some groups who previously did not have access to any leave arrangements. The flexible nature of this leave may enable the parents to design a pattern of leave that better suits their needs.

There were two consultation respondents representing this protected characteristic in the Modern Workplaces Consultation. One respondent did not respond to this specific proposal. The other agreed that this proposal would have a positive impact upon families with disabled children as it would allow both parents to take leave simultaneously to attend consultations with specialists.

Gender

We anticipate that this policy will have a positive impact upon this protected characteristic. Women will have more flexibility in how they manage competing work and domestic commitments. If they do not wish to have access to flexibility, then they can maintain their current provision of maternity rights.

⁵ Ibid, p. 187

If they agree a pattern of leave with their employer, they will be able to take leave more flexibly, alternating periods of work with periods of leave. This may enable women to retain a stronger attachment to the labour market. The Maternity and Paternity Rights and Women Returners Survey 2009/10 showed that a higher proportion of non-returning mothers reported no flexible working arrangements were available in their pre-birth job⁶. The survey subsequently suggested that the availability of family-friendly leave arrangement policies in the workplace may help facilitate mothers return to the work post-birth. Increased flexibility will give women more options.

Women should also benefit from the reduction in the gender pay gap. Evidence shows that part of the reason for the gender pay gap is due to the extended time taken by women out of the workplace to look after the child. Mothers who break their attachment to an employer and who return to work part-time, do appear to suffer from lower wages than women who do not take a break from the labour market⁷. We anticipate that giving mothers more flexibility to alternate periods of work and periods of leave if they so wish, combined with the opportunity for their partners to take FPL, may enable more women to retain a stronger attachment to the labour market if they choose to. In the long term, we believe this will effect a cultural change that sees men and women sharing the responsibility for childcare more evenly between them. This is likely to have a positive impact upon the gender pay gap for women.

We anticipate that this proposal will also benefit men. The opportunity for fathers to share FPL with their partner will give men the opportunity to take time out of the workplace to care for their child.

This policy will benefit fathers who fall into the lower income household category and those working for small and medium sized employers. Evidence cites that family-friendly work arrangements varied significantly by gross weekly household income⁸. 40% of fathers from the lowest household income reported having no access to childcare support arrangements. This compared to only 17% of fathers in the top household income band saying they had no access to childcare support arrangements in their workplace⁹.

Fathers working for small and medium sized employers were more likely to report no access to family – friendly arrangements (26% and 23% respectively) than fathers who worked for large private or public employers (both 11%). Therefore, this policy will iron out the differences between fathers who have access to family-friendly arrangements and those who don't.

The overall consultation response to this proposal was positive, in that respondents suggested its flexibility will enable families to address a number of

⁶ MPRS survey p.95

⁷ Modern Workplaces Consultation, May 2011, p.15

⁸ MPRS Survey, 2009/10, p.135

⁹ Ibid, p. 180

key concerns that families usually face when balancing family and work, including a family's own needs and preferences as to when they want to take time off and enabling families to address family finances.

Gender reassignment

We do not predict that this change will impact upon people who have been gender reassigned any differently to those who have not been gender reassigned. There were no consultation respondents representing gender reassignment who had commented on this change.

Race and Nationality

We predict that this policy will have a positive impact upon non-white fathers. Research shows that fathers who belonged to a white ethnic group were more likely to report access to family-friendly leave arrangements. 16% of white fathers reported working in a place with no access to family-friendly leave arrangements, compared to 32% of non-white fathers¹⁰. No consultation respondent representing this protected characteristic responded to this specific policy.

Religion/belief

We do not predict that this change will impact upon people who have a particular religious belief any differently to those who don't have a religious belief or belong to a different religion. There were no consultation respondents who raised any concerns towards this proposal.

Sexual Orientation

We believe that this policy will have a positive impact upon this characteristic. As part of these proposals, we are also extending adoption leave and pay to include certain surrogacy arrangements (where the parents meet the criteria and possess or intend to apply for a parental order).

Maternity and Pregnancy

We predict that this policy will have a positive impact on mothers as it provides greater flexibility and the opportunity for them to tailor their maternity period to suit their needs.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.187

4. Adoption and Surrogacy leave: Statutory adoption leave (SAL) broadly mirrors the leave provisions for birth parents. However, there are some differences between the two sets of parents. The qualifying period differs for maternity and adoption leave – there is no qualifying period for birth mothers’ to be eligible for statutory maternity leave (a “day 1” right), whereas adopters will have had to have worked for the same employer for 26 weeks in order to qualify for statutory adoption leave. Statutory maternity pay is enhanced to 90% of salary for the first 6 weeks, where an adopter’s salary is not. There is also no equivalent of maternity allowance available to self employed or low paid adopters.

Under the flexible parental leave system, we intend to equalise some of the provisions for adoptive and birth parents and to extend adoption leave and pay to couples who become parents through surrogacy arrangements (“intended parents”) and who meet the qualifying conditions and intend to apply for a Parental Order. In addition, we will enhance the first 6 weeks of statutory adoption pay to 90% of salary, in the same way that it is for statutory maternity pay.

This would mean that adoptive and surrogate parents became eligible for:

- statutory adoption leave as a “day 1” right;
- 90% salary enhancement for the first 6 weeks.

We did not consult on the adoption or surrogacy element of this proposal during the Modern Workplaces consultation.

Age

We believe that this policy may be of particular benefit to those parents adopting children later in life. As adoption leave and pay is also to be extended to intended parents in surrogacy arrangement, older couples may benefit.

Disability

We anticipate that this policy will have a positive impact on parents adopting disabled children. Parents who have disabled children are currently eligible to take unpaid parental leave until the child is 18 years of age. This flexible parental leave policy will give more flexibility by allowing more choice of when either parent takes leave to look after their child. The leave can also be taken concurrently by both parents.

Gender

Although this proposal is not gender specific, we believe the policy will have a positive impact for same sex couples who are adopting as they would be responsible for defining their own roles within the relationship when accessing their right to adoption leave and pay. The “primary adopter” (the parent opting to take statutory adoption leave), will be entitled to up to 52 weeks adoption leave and the “secondary adopter” will benefit from the extended time off for paternity leave.

Religion/belief

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

Gender reassignment

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

Maternity and Pregnancy

We predict that this will have a positive impact on adopting and surrogate parents as the policy provides greater flexibility and choice on how and when they take their statutory adoption leave and pay.

Race and Nationality

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

5. Unpaid Parental Leave: Extension of unpaid parental leave from 13 to 18 weeks to be taken before the child's 18th birthday.

At present unpaid parental leave must be taken before the child's fifth birthday unless the child is disabled (in which case it increases to 18 years). The policy proposal is to increase the amount of leave available from 13 weeks per parent per child to 18 weeks (this element has to be implemented as part of a change to the Directive) and to increase the age limit by which parents must take the leave from 5 to 18 years. This would particularly benefit parents of older children during school holidays. It will also fill the gap in provision to help parents of older children cope with non-emergency caring responsibilities such as sickness and planned medical appointments. 30% of consultation respondents said that unpaid parental leave should be extended to the age of 18.

The amount of unpaid leave available to parents will increase from 13 to 18 weeks in March 2013. We plan to introduce changes to the age limit alongside the introduction of the new FPL system. In the interim, the age limit will not change for parents of children with disabilities and will remain at 18 years old.

Gender

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Disability

Under the current system, families with disabled children are already entitled to take unpaid parental leave until the child is 18 years of age.

Two consultation respondents representing this protected characteristic were involved in this consultation. One consultation respondent did not respond on this proposal. The second consultation respondent agreed with this proposal suggesting that it would have a positive impact upon families with disabled children. This is because under the current system, only parents with a child in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) are regarded as parents of disabled children and have the current right to take unpaid parental leave until the age of 18. However the consultation respondent believed that only 330,770 disabled children in the UK receive DLA out of a population of approximately 700,000 disabled children. This means that less than half the population of families with disabled children would be eligible for the purpose of this right. Therefore increasing this right to include all parents with a child up to the age of 18 will benefit those parents of disabled children who are not currently covered by this policy.

Age

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Religion/belief

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Gender reassignment

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Sexual Orientation

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Maternity and Pregnancy

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

Race and Nationality

No concerns were raised that this proposal would affect people with these protected characteristics differently to those with non-protected characteristics.

6. Extending the Right to Request Flexible Working

The right to request flexible working is currently limited to certain employees with caring responsibilities. The Coalition Agreement commits the Government to extending the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so. The extension to all employees forms part of a platform of measures to restructure employment practices in the UK, with the aim of creating a culture of flexible, fair and family-friendly workplaces.

Extending the right to request flexible working to all employees will enable all employees to request changes to the way they work and create a better work-life balance whether they are older employees who want to stagger their retirement; disabled employees who need to make minor adjustments to their working pattern so they can compete in the workplace or individuals who want to get more involved in community or charity work.

This extension will also provide employers with access to a wider pool of skills and talents in the workforce, along with improved recruitment and retention rates, and increase staff morale and productivity as well as help to change the perception that flexible working can harm career progression and to encourage more fathers to request flexible working and take a greater share of childcare responsibilities.

Age

We believe that this policy will have a positive impact upon this characteristic. Younger people have a greater expectation of flexible working arrangements compared to previous generations and this will help meet their career and

work/life aspirations. Older employees will be able to better manage work and personal commitments, and it will aid their transition into retirement.

Disability

Under the current system, employees with disabilities or who have caring responsibility for someone who is disabled, already have the opportunity to request flexible working, however this extension will mean that individuals requesting flexible working will no longer need to identify the reasons for the request. This will mean that disabled workers who do not wish to identify themselves as disabled will be more likely to make a request for flexible working.

Gender

As this policy is not gender specific we do not anticipate there to be any adverse impact on this protected characteristic. However, we envisage that men may now feel less reluctant to request a change to their pattern of work to create a better work-life balance, as requests will no longer be limited to certain employees with caring responsibilities.

Religion/belief

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

Gender reassignment

We do not anticipate that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

Sexual Orientation

We do not anticipate that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

Maternity and Pregnancy

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic, however the right to request flexible working is currently restricted to parents and carers, this has created resentment in some workplaces where parents and carers are viewed as being singled out. This extension will remove that resentment as all employees will have the right to request flexible working.

Race and Nationality

We do not predict that this protected characteristic will be affected differently to those without this protected characteristic

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Glossary

Family Friendly arrangements

The family-friendly arrangement is catch-all term that addresses family leave and flexible working arrangements and employer supported childcare and includes

- Maternity Leave and Pay
- Paternity Leave and Pay (births)
- Adoption Leave and Pay
- Paternity Leave and Pay (adoptions)
- Additional Paternity Leave
- Keeping in Touch Days
- Parental Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Time off for Dependants

Flexible Working arrangements

The flexible working arrangements explored in the survey include: part-time work, term time work, job share, flexible working hours, reduced hours for an agreed period, shifts to meet employees' needs and home working.

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Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000

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