

Almost half of employers support extending statutory paternity leave and pay, new CIPD report shows

3 years ago



New data from the [CIPD](#) shows that almost half of organisations support extending statutory paternity/partner leave and pay, with 29% of those backing an extension to either six weeks or more.

In response, the CIPD is urging the Government to increase statutory paternity/partner leave to six weeks, either at or near the full rate of pay, to help families balance caring responsibilities and provide more financial support for working parents.

Currently, under statutory paternity leave, employees can choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks' leave if they have been employed for at least 26 weeks. Statutory paternity pay for eligible employees is currently either £156.66 a week or 90% of their average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

The CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, surveyed 2,000 senior decision-makers and found that:

- Almost half (46%) of employers support extending statutory paternity/partner leave and pay. A third (33%) of those believe this should be extended to four weeks, and 29% think it should be extended to either six weeks or more.
- Most organisations (49%) have a paternity/partner leave policy which provides the current statutory leave entitlement and pay.

The findings also highlight that very few new parents are using shared parental leave; 85% of organisations say no new fathers/partners have taken up shared parental leave in the past two years.

Shared parental leave allows a portion of maternity leave and pay to be shared with partners and was introduced in 2015 to give parents greater flexibility in how they care for their child. Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser at the CIPD, said: “We last explored organisational approaches to parental leave in 2016 and since then, surprisingly, very little has changed in employer practice. Our research suggests that shared parental leave in its current form isn’t working; take-up continues to be very low, and we have seen a downward trend since 2016. “These survey findings reinforce our policy call to extend statutory paternity/partner leave and pay, which will help balance caring responsibilities, reflect the changing nature of modern families and provide much-needed financial support to working parents. Extended paternity/partner leave can have emotional benefits for parents and children, as well as improving the gender pay gap, as it enables a more equal split of time out of work to care for children.” In addition, the CIPD is calling on the Government to provide affordable childcare from the end of maternity leave and to make flexible working requests a day one right. The CIPD found:

- Over a third (34%) of employers in England say the introduction of 30 hours free childcare per week for all three to four-year-olds in 2017 has made a positive impact on the number of women returning to work.
- Over half (56%) of employers in England believe the number of women with young children returning to work would improve further if the same level of free childcare was extended to children aged under two years old.

Claire continues: “There is also a need for reform in current childcare and early years education provision. Taking these steps to extend statutory paternity/partner leave and enabling affordable childcare from the end of maternity leave will create more opportunities and flexibility for working parents, by allowing them to return to work earlier if they choose to.”

[Article from CIPD](#)