

New online tool to help working families make the most of shared parental leave



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New online tool will make it easier for expectant parents to access and understand Shared Parental Leave and Pay

working families can check their eligibility for the scheme in 5 minutes, check what pay they'd be entitled to, and notify their employer using the tool

scheme supports mums aiming to return to work and dads and partners who want to be more involved in the early stages of their child's life

A new online tool will help expectant parents share time off in the key, early stages of their baby's life.

Launched today, the new tool will make it easier for expectant parents to access and understand Shared Parental Leave and Pay. Parents will be able to check their eligibility for the scheme, calculate their pay entitlement, as well as downloading all the documents they need to secure leave from their employer.

Shared Parental Leave and Pay allows working parents across Great Britain to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay in the first year of their child's life (or within a year of placement if the child is adopted).

Government research has found that nearly all parents who used Shared Parental Leave would recommend it – and the new tool will ensure more families can make the most of the scheme to spend time with their new-borns.

Labour Markets Minister Paul Scully said:

Nothing is more special than seeing your child hit those major milestones like smiling for the first time or starting to crawl – and both parents should get to share in that joy.

Shared Parental Leave gives working parents the power to balance and share childcare and work, and this new tool will mean it's quicker and easier to get that precious time with your baby.

Shared leave and pay gives working families much more choice and flexibility about who cares for their child in the first year, and when. The scheme helps working women exercise more choice about when to go back to work, while also encouraging and supporting dads and partners to take a greater role in their child's care if they wish.

By supporting parents who want to share childcare responsibilities, shared leave will help the UK build back fairer, with a more flexible working environment that helps everyone access workplace opportunities.

Jane Gratton, Head of People Policy at the BCC, said:

Shared parental leave supports parents to balance family and career priorities and helps employers retain skills. This tool is a welcome initiative that will hopefully simplify the SPL process, improve access and take-up, and encourage diversity in the workplace.

Jennifer Liston-Smith, Head of Thought Leadership at Bright Horizons, said:

We know that the most successful businesses are those which recognise the family and care responsibilities of their staff. Bright Horizons is privileged and proud to partner with many employers of choice in the matter of the work and family support they provide to their people. Parenting is what parents do, right from birth or adoption and regardless of gender or family structure. Parental Leave should mirror this and supporting parents to share that first year of leave is an important step. Bright Horizons has actively supported Shared

Parental Leave since its inception.

Simon Kelleher, Head of Policy at Working Families, said:

When introduced in 2015, Shared Parental Leave represented an important step forward by providing parents greater choice and flexibility around how they manage work and caring arrangements in the first year of a new-born's life. The option to share periods of leave, or alternate between blocks of leave and work, helps support the aspirations of mothers, fathers and partners, and allows them to balance their responsibilities according to their circumstances.

We know from enquiries to our advice service that many parents and employers can find the system confusing at times, so we welcome the launch of this new tool which will enable more families to benefit from planning their parental leave in a way that suits them.

Notes to editors

Parents are able to agree a pattern of leave that works for them and their employer, and can take leave and pay in up to 3 blocks (more if their employer agrees), returning to work between periods of leave, if they wish:

eligible parents can spend up to 6 months off work together or alternatively stagger their leave and pay so that one of them is always at home with their child in the first year

Parents also have access to up to 20 Shared Parental Leave in Touch Days (SPLiT days) each. Parents can use one or more of their SPLiT Days to work during a week that they are on Shared Parental Leave:

this enables both parents to trial part-time working whilst they are on Shared Parental Leave, for example the father and/or the mother could use his SPLiT days to trial working a 2, 3, or 4 day week

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