



FACTSHEET

Resources for families

Taking time off with your baby

If you're an expectant father, or the partner of a pregnant woman, you're entitled to time off work to help you prepare for becoming a dad, and get involved in the all-important first year of your baby's life.

Before the baby arrives, you have the right to time off to attend two ante-natal appointments.

Your employer doesn't have to pay for this time (up to 6.5 hours per appointment), although many will do so. But if you're a permanent employee, your employer must allow you to take it, either as annual or unpaid leave; alternatively, you could offer to swap shifts or make up the time.

If you have worked for your employer continuously for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (known as the 'qualifying week'), you will also have the right to Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay. This includes those who are adopting a child.

To qualify you must you have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing; are the biological father of the child or are the mother's husband or partner (including same sex relationships). You don't have to be married to qualify.

Think ahead

You must give the correct notice, though – which means telling your employer as soon as possible that you want to take paternity leave, and no later than the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth. You need to say when the baby is due, if you're going to take one or two weeks off, and when you expect your paternity leave to start.

If you meet all the criteria above, work for your employer up until the day your baby is born, and earn more than £112 per week, you'll also be eligible for paternity pay – which is currently £139.58 per week, or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

Shared parental leave

On top of Paternity Leave and Pay, you may, if both you and your child's mum meet the criteria, be eligible to take up to 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

How this works is that mothers can, if they wish, opt out of Maternity Leave from two weeks after the birth, and transfer all or part of the rest of their entitlement to you. It's possible, if employers agree, to take SPL in up to three blocks each. You can take it turns to be off work, or both of you can be at home at the same time.

How you choose to split the time is up to you - you could decide to share more time together with the baby in the period straight after the birth, for example; you could share the leave between you through the year; or she could return to work earlier than is usual, and you take the bulk of the year.

Whatever your plan, it's vital to follow the correct application process and deadlines. And remember that your employer can refuse applications to take SPL in blocks; it may insist that the leave is taken in a single, continuous block.

For more information, check out the [Government website](#).

Flexible working

Longer term, a growing number of dads are making the decision to work flexibly once their children arrive – allowing them to play more of a role as a hands-on parent, as well as bringing home the bacon. There are lots of types of flexible working, including part-time, term-time-only working and home-based working. You now have a legal right to request flexible working from your employer – they don't have to agree to it, but they do have to take your request seriously. Find out more on the [Government website](#).

Prepared by Jeremy Davies of the Fatherhood Institute

More resources for employers, service providers and families are available at: www.yearofthedad.org

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