



FACTSHEET

Resources for families

Negotiating your work-life balance

Over recent decades, dads and mums have been sharing the earning and caregiving that are part and parcel of modern parenting, like never before.

Slowly, Britain's work landscape is changing. In 2003, dads won the right to two weeks' paternity leave. Growing numbers of men are working flexibly in order to combine their working and domestic responsibilities more effectively. And 2015's introduction of Shared Parental Leave opens the doors for greater sharing, allowing eligible couples to transfer almost all the mum's maternity leave to the dad.

But there's still a long way to go. Dads still do more of the breadwinning, and the average full-time working man does more hours per week than the average full-time woman.

And for some employers, men are still from Mars and women from Venus.

Making assumptions

Nobody ever asks whether a father should go back to work after his baby is born - it's just assumed that he will, and in fact many people would think better of him if he increased his working hours after becoming a dad, because it would mark him out as a better provider!

So what can you do if you're a dad who wants to carve out a better balance between work and family life?

Know your rights

First of all, spend some time finding out what your rights are. Depending on your circumstances, they may include:

- [The right to attend up to 2 antenatal appointments](#)
- [The right to two weeks' paternity leave when the baby arrives](#)
- [The right to take shared parental leave for up to 50 weeks](#)

- [Unpaid parental leave until your child is 18](#)
- [Time off for dependants/compassionate leave.](#)

The various forms of parenting leave are paid at a very low statutory rate, but your employer may top this up. If your employer hasn't given you any information about what's on offer, ask your line manager or the HR department for details.

Flexible working

You also have the right to request flexible working.

There is good evidence that flexible working is good for employees and employers too – partly because one of the results of being trusted to work more flexibly is that you feel more loyal to your employer, and therefore work harder.

But employers are less likely to approve flexible working requests coming from men, and as a result men tend to be more reluctant to even ask in the first place. If you do want to ask for flexible working, get clear in your own mind how far you are prepared to make yourself unpopular in order to achieve your aim.

For more information about the procedure you need to follow visit [flexible working](#).

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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