

Fathers to get six months' paternity leave ^[1]

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Source: Guardian

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jan 2010

AVAILABILITY
See text below.

EXCERPTS

Dads will be able to take up to six months' paternity leave while their child's mother returns to work, under government plans announced today.

Fathers will have a legal right to take the place of the mother at home for the last three months of her nine-month maternity leave.

During that time, they would be eligible for statutory government pay of Â£123 a week. They would then be allowed to take an additional unpaid three months off, which would effectively allow couples to have a total of 12 months' parental leave between them.

The measure would allow mothers who earn more than their partners to return to work earlier, and is a victory for Harriet Harman, the Women and Equalities minister, who has championed extra parental leave and flexible working rights for parents.

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The transferable leave announcement was welcomed by the trade union movement.

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said the proposals would help millions balance their work and family life. "As both parents work in most modern families, it's right that mums and dads should decide who looks after their baby, rather than the state deciding for them by only paying the mother for parental leave," he said.

"Business lobby groups have opposed every new family-friendly right, from flexible working to extended maternity pay. But in reality these changes have hugely benefitted millions of families and have had no damaging effect on businesses."

The Tories speculated that the pledge would be "quietly dropped" by Labour after voters go to the polls.

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- reprinted from the Guardian

Region: Europe ^[2]

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/02/fathers-get-six-months-paternity-leave>

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