

**The Government has today confirmed that it will be introducing the new system of shared parental leave and pay in 2015. The new arrangements will come into effect for babies due on or after 5 April 2015.**

In its [Response](#) the Government has set out its plans for how the administration of the new system will be managed. By way of reminder, under the new system the current entitlement to 52 weeks of maternity leave (of which 39 are paid) will remain in place as the default position for all employed women. Women with working partners who both meet the qualifying conditions for shared parental leave will, however, be able to end their maternity leave early and take shared parental leave and pay with their partners.

According to the Response, under the proposed new system:

- Employees will be required to provide the same mandatory information when opting into the shared parental leave system as is currently required under the additional paternity leave system, e.g. name and National Insurance numbers of the mother and the father or mother's partner, number of weeks of maternity leave taken, etc.
- Employees will also be required to provide a non-binding indication of their expected pattern of leave as part of the mandatory information they will be required to give to their employer of their eligibility and intention to take shared parental leave. The aim is to give employers an early indication of their employees' intended leave pattern.
- There will be a limit on the number of notifications for leave a parent can make. Employees will only be able to give 3 notifications to their employer to take a period of leave, with the aim of giving greater certainty for employers. There will, however, be nothing to stop employers and employees mutually agreeing to further notifications, if that works for both sides.

- The cut-off point for taking shared parental leave will be 52 weeks from birth.
- The cut-off point for mothers wishing to revoke a binding notice to end maternity leave that was given prior to birth will be 6 weeks following birth, i.e. mothers who have indicated prior to giving birth that they want to end their maternity leave and opt into the shared parental system will be able to change their minds, provided it is within 6 weeks of giving birth.
- The principle of Keeping in Touch (KIT) days will be carried forward for parents who take shared parental leave. Parents will be able to take up to 20 KIT-style days each whilst on shared parental leave – these will be in addition to the 10 days available to women on maternity leave.
- The right to return to the same job will be maintained for employees returning from any period of leave that includes maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave that totals 26 weeks or less, even if the leave is taken in discontinuous blocks.

The Government will be producing guidance to accompany the legislative changes.

Although the new provisions will not be coming into force until April 2015, employers should start considering now how best to implement them.