Government announces plans to relax paternity leave rules

The Government has announced that it intends to introduce legislation to make it easier for fathers to take paternity leave. It is not yet known when these changes will come into force.

Last month, the Government published its response to a 2019 consultation on reforming parental leave and pay entitlements. In its response, the Government announced plans to make the following changes to the paternity leave framework:

- **Allowing discontinuous blocks of leave:** eligible employees will be able to take the two weeks' statutory paternity leave in two separate blocks of one week of leave (currently, only one week or a single block of two weeks may be taken).

- **Providing a longer window within which to take the leave:** eligible employees will be able to take their statutory paternity leave within 52 weeks of birth or placement for adoption (currently, it must be taken in the first eight weeks after birth or placement for adoption).

- **Simplifying notice requirements:** the notice requirements will be changed to make them more proportionate to the amount of time the father or partner plans to take off work. It is proposed that fathers will need to give 28 days' notice before each period of leave they intend to take, although the notice of entitlement will still need to be given 15 weeks before birth.

At the same time, the Government confirmed that it does not intend to reform either the shared parental leave or unpaid parental leave frameworks.

The Government has said secondary legislation will be needed to effect these changes and will be introduced in due course.

We will provide a further update on these reforms once the draft legislation has been published.

[Parental Leave and Pay: Government response, June 2023](#)

BDBF is a leading employment law firm based at Bank in the City of London. If you would like to discuss any issues relating to the content of this article, please contact Amanda Steadman (AmandaSteadman@bdbf.co.uk) or your usual BDBF contact.