



**Employers
Direct**

TM

Your essential guide to

Family Friendly Changes in 2015

Free Advice
for Employers on

0800 144 4050

www.employersdirect-uk.org

Family Friendly Changes in 2015



Introduction

Traditionally, family friendly rights have focused on mothers and fathers following the traditional view that a mother will take responsibility for the care of the child. New ways to have children, other than birth, and developments in the sharing of care responsibilities between parents have led to the need for changes to the rights of employees in the workplace.

2015 is the year that employment law is catching up with family developments and is introducing and changing rights to focus on parents, both natural and otherwise.

Maternity and paternity

From 5th April, [statutory maternity pay](#) and [statutory paternity pay](#) will increase to £139.58 per week.

Shared Parental Leave

For babies due on or after 5th April 2015, parents who meet certain qualifying criteria will gain the right to take [Shared Parental Leave \(SHPL\)](#). SHPL allows employees to share leave between themselves and to take it in discontinuous blocks.

Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) will be paid at £139.58 per week.

Adoption

Currently to become eligible to take statutory adoption leave, employees need 26 weeks' service. From 5th April 2015, employees no longer need any length of service to be entitled to adoption leave. They can now exercise this right from day one of their employment.

Also, the calculation for statutory adoption pay will change so that employees can now get 90% of their contractual pay for the first 6 weeks leave, rather than the statutory rate. This pay system will therefore be aligned with the current maternity pay system.

Employees adopting from overseas will also gain an entitlement to SHPL and ShPP. Adoptions from overseas are where a child enters Great Britain from outside the UK in connection with, or for the purposes of, an adoption which is not under the law of any part of the UK. The original SHPL regulations did not address adoptions from overseas however these changes will take effect from 5th April.

Prospective adopters will also gain a right to time off for work to attend pre-adoption appointments. One prospective adopter will have the right to take paid leave on 5 occasions; their partner will have the right to take unpaid leave on 2 occasions.

From 5th April, statutory adoption pay will increase to £139.58 per week.

Fostering

Adoption leave and paternity leave will become available to employees who are approved prospective adopters and local authority foster carers and have a child placed with them under the 'Fostering for Adoption' scheme. If the employees use this leave they will not gain a second right to leave for the same child when the placement becomes a placement for adoption.

Surrogacy

The current situation means that the woman who gives birth to the baby is entitled to take maternity leave whilst the intended parents, even though these may be responsible for the complete care for the baby, have not had any rights to time off except for unpaid Parental Leave or annual leave.

From 5th April 2015, the intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement who are entitled to and intend to apply for a Parental Order under the Human Embryology and Fertilisation Act 2008 will be able to take adoption leave and pay and paternity leave and pay, if each parent meets the qualifying conditions for these.

Parents who qualify will be entitled to take [Shared Parental Leave](#) for a year after the birth of the child, for babies due on or after 5th April 2015, by ending their adoption leave and sharing the remainder of the leave due.

Parental Leave

Parents are entitled to take 18 weeks' parental leave in relation to their children – this can be used, for example, to accompany a child during a stay in hospital, or just to enable a family to spend more time together. The period for which unpaid parental leave can be taken will be extended up to the child's 18th birthday – rather than before the child's 5th birthday. Parental Leave is not to be confused with Shared Parental Leave.



Free Advice for Employers on

0800 144 4050

www.employersdirect-uk.org