About this report

This report examines some of the factors contributing to discrimination at work. Allen & Overy conducted a quantitative survey with UK adult workers via YouGov and looked at male participants’ attitudes towards paternity leave in light of the extension of parental leave from 13 to 18 weeks on 8 March 2013.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. Total sample size was 1163 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12 and 18 September 2012. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of UK workers.

Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to roundings.
It used to be the case that workplace family rights were definitely a woman’s issue.

But times and legislation have moved on considerably over the last decade. Men now have a raft of family rights, including paternity leave, parental leave and the right to request flexible working. And the landscape is set to change again.

Radical proposals on shared parental leave will enhance fathers’ rights even further, turning the workplace family agenda into a gender neutral issue.

But will fathers take advantage of family rights? What is the current take-up of men’s family rights? We surveyed the nation’s working men to find out.

Our survey asked all the male workers how far they agreed or disagreed with the statement “I would consider taking paternity leave”.

*While this publication focuses on fathers, many of the rights are also available to same-sex partners and adopters
‘I would consider taking paternity leave’

Disagree 21%

Neither agree nor disagree 15%

Don't know 5%

Agree 58%

Age groups considering paternity leave*

Age | Consideration
--- | ---
18-24 | 58%
25-34 | 79%
35-44 | 70%
44-54 | 48%
55+ | 39%

*Breakdown of 58% of respondents who would consider taking paternity leave
The statistics clearly show that workplace family rights are now relevant to men as well as women.

58% agreed with the statement to varying degrees. Stereotypically, you would expect the younger workers to be more inclined towards taking paternity leave, and this was borne out by the statistics. In the very youngest age group of workers (18-24) where family considerations are less prevalent, the “agreed” rate was the same as the base rate: 58%. This increased to 79% for the 25-34 category, 70% for those aged 35-44 and 48% for 45-54 year olds.

What are the factors that would prevent you from taking paternity leave?

For those men less interested in paternity leave, we probed to find out what factors would be relevant in their decision-making. It came as no surprise that the biggest consideration was financial sacrifice. However, we thought that career progression or lack of encouragement from employers might also be significant factors. Far from it; both came well down the list, with 7% and 6%, respectively. The second most popular answer, with 26%, was “traditionally it has never been done so I wouldn’t consider it”, followed by “I am not paternal” at 24% and “my partner would want to stay with the baby” at 20%.

Reasons for not considering paternity leave*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not prepared for financial sacrifice</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionally never been done</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not paternal</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner would want to stay home with the baby</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Breakdown of 21% of respondents who would not consider taking paternity leave
Current rights for fathers

- Paternity leave for up to two weeks just after the birth of the child, which is paid at the statutory rate of GBP135.45 per week (increasing to GBP136.78 from 1 April 2013)
- Parental leave for both mothers and fathers of up to 13 weeks. Parental leave is unpaid, and must be taken before the child’s 5th birthday (or before the 18th birthday in the case of a disabled child)
- Additional paternity leave – a woman can now split her maternity leave with the father if she returns to work early; this can be taken from 20 weeks after the birth of the child, and it is only available for the child’s first year
- Right to request flexible working for parents of children under 18
- Unpaid time off to care for a sick dependant or where there is an unexpected disruption in care arrangements

New rights for fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental leave (unpaid) is being extended from 13 to 18 weeks</th>
<th>8 March 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Shared parental leave – totally flexible as to how it is taken by either parent (with the exception of a two-week period following the birth, which is reserved for the mother)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unpaid time off for two antenatal care appointments</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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It remains to be seen whether the take-up of family leave by fathers will increase with the introduction of shared parental leave. Irrespective of the take-up, an employer will no longer be able to assume that it will be the woman who cares for the baby.
Next steps

– The only immediate action point is to check that your policies are up-to-date to reflect the increase in unpaid parental leave for fathers from 13 to 18 weeks.

– As far as shared parental leave is concerned, the finer detail is still to be worked out. The ball is now rolling though, as on 25 February 2013, the Government issued a consultation document on how it envisages the new regime will look and work with existing arrangements.

– The consultation closes on 17 May 2013, and the Government expects to issue its response in the summer.

– In the meantime, employers need to start thinking about what enhanced contractual benefits will be offered to fathers in preparation for shared parental leave in 2015. Anything other than equal benefits is likely to be sex discrimination. This makes it a perfect time to review your offering in this area.
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