

## Employment news - autumn: Maternity leave to be transferable between parents

26 OCTOBER 2009

**CATEGORY:**  
ARTICLE

The Government has recently announced that it proposes to introduce measures enabling women to transfer part of their maternity leave to the fathers of their babies. The proposal was first made in 2004 but the decision to implement it with effect from April 2011 was unexpected as there were indications that the Government would scrap the proposal.

There is no current proposal to extend paid maternity leave to 12 months from 2011, however. Previously, it was thought that the two measures would be introduced at the same time.

Under the new scheme:

- Families will have the choice to transfer up to six months' leave to the father should they want to, which can be taken by the father once the mother has returned to work;
- This new provision will be available during the second six months' of the child's life, giving parents the option of dividing a period of paid leave entitlement between them;
- Some of the leave may be paid if taken during the mother's 39-week maternity pay period. This would be paid at the same rate as Statutory Maternity Pay (currently £123.06 per week);
- Parents will be required to "self certify" by providing details of their eligibility to their employer.
- Employers and HMRC will both be able to carry out further checks on entitlement if necessary.