



Paid parental leave available in Ireland from November 2019

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A General Scheme of the Parental Leave and Benefit Bill 2019 was published on 23 April 2019. Under this scheme, from November 2019, all new parents in employment or self-employment will be able to avail of two weeks paid parental leave.

This is expected to increase to seven weeks over the next three years and will be paid at the same rate as Maternity Benefit and Paternity Benefit - that is €245 per week. This paid leave must be taken within 52 weeks after the birth of a child or, in the case of adoption, within a period following the date of placement.

At present, under the Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006, employees are entitled to a total of 18 weeks unpaid parental leave in respect of each child. In general, this unpaid leave must be taken before each child turns eight (or 16 if the child concerned has a disability or a long-term illness).

However, while the introduction of paid parental leave is a welcome development for new parents, the statistics below suggest that, to-date, take-up rates among fathers for parental leave have been as low as 10-20%.

It will be interesting to see whether the introduction of paid parental leave will change these statistics or whether paid parental leave will prove to be no more than an extension to maternity leave, in all but name.

For more information on parental leave legislation, please contact blathnaid.evans@ogier.com

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