

Shared parental leave and pay

How shared parental leave works

Shared parental leave gives more choice in how 2 parents can care for their child.

Eligible parents who are sharing responsibility for a child can get shared parental leave in the first year after:

- the birth of their child
- adopting a child
- getting a parental order if they had the child through surrogacy

How much shared parental leave a parent can get

Eligible parents can get up to 50 weeks of shared parental leave.

How much shared parental leave eligible parents get depends on how much:

- maternity leave the birth parent has taken
- adoption leave the primary adopter has taken

The birth parent or primary adopter can take up to 52 weeks of statutory maternity or adoption leave. They must take a minimum of 2 weeks' leave after the birth or adoption. After this they can end their leave so the remaining can be shared between the 2 parents. This leaves up to 50 weeks of leave to be shared.

For example, if a birth parent stops their maternity leave after 30 weeks, they or their partner could take shared parental leave for the remaining 22 weeks.

It's the same amount even if the parents have:

- more than one baby, for example twins
- more than one child in the same adoption placement

If the birth parent or primary adopter is not entitled to maternity or adoption leave

They will not be eligible to take shared parental leave themselves. However, if they're getting maternity pay, adoption pay or Maternity Allowance, they can 'curtail' (end) this to create shared parental leave or shared parental pay for the other parent.

Ways parents can use shared parental leave

Ways eligible parents could use shared parental leave include:

- the birth parent or primary adopter returns to work early from maternity or adoption leave and takes shared parental leave at a later date

- the birth parent or primary adopter returns to work and their partner takes shared parental leave
- both parents are off at the same time
- both parents share shared parental leave evenly and are off at different times
- both parents return to work at the same time and take shared parental leave at a later date