

New Parental Leave and Benefit Bill

The New Parental Leave and Benefit Bill will give both parents two weeks paid parental leave. It is the Bill will be in force by 1 November 2019. This bill will provide both parents of the child with two weeks paid parental leave to be taken within the first year of the child's life. The payment of €245 per week will be made by the State.

It has been introduced to enable both parents to spend more time with their child during the first year of their life and will be in addition to the following protective leaves:

26 weeks of paid maternity leave and up to 16 weeks unpaid additional maternity leave to mothers

2 weeks of paid paternity leave to fathers to be taken within six months after the birth of the child

24 weeks of paid adoptive leave to adopting mothers and sole male adopters as well as up to 16 weeks of unpaid additional adoptive leave

18 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child to each parent and the leave must be taken before the child reaches eight years or 16 years in the case of a child with a disability or long-term illness

It is expected that this two weeks' benefit will expand to seven weeks' leave by 2021 and the following elements will apply:

Each parent will be entitled to the leave where the birth date of the child falls on or after 1 November 2019 or the day of placement in the case of adoption is on or after 1 November 2019

An employee will be required to have 12 months continuous service in order to qualify for this parental leave

The leave is non transferable between parents, except in case where one parent dies, all or any remaining leave is transferred to the other parent

The parental leave must be taken within the first year of the child's life otherwise the benefit is lost if it is not used

The parental leave is not allowed to be taken before the date of birth or in the case of adoption, before the date of placement

The period of leave taken cannot be less than one week in duration. For example, a parent can take two individual weeks off or the entire two weeks leave together

Each parent who takes this leave continues to accrue annual leave and public holiday entitlement

Employees who take this leave are entitled to return to the same role, terms and conditions of employment when they return to work

The employee is required to give the employer a minimum of four weeks written notice of their intention to take this leave