

# Evidence suggests 3-month 'daddy leave' could fix UK gender equality

 fatherhoodinstitute.org/2018/evidence-suggests-3-month-daddy-leave-could-fix-uk-gender-equality-deficit

**The Fatherhood Institute welcomes the Women and Equalities Committee' proposal, which could cut gender pay gap and pregnancy discrimination, support fathering, equalise home-life – and even lead to 'post-Brexit baby boom'.**

The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee today (20 March 2018) recommends the new “use-it-or-lose-it” 3 months benefit, available to fathers and second parents in their baby’s first year. Read their report [here](#). This is different from the current low-paid system (known as Shared Parental Leave – SPL), which requires mothers to transfer some of their leave to their partner- and for which only a minority of parents qualify. Few fathers are using this leave.

Adrienne Burgess, the Fatherhood Institute’s co-Chief Executive, said: “Research shows that three months’ well paid, ‘use-it-or-lose-it’ fatherhood leave in the first year makes a huge impact. In addition to equalising roles at home and transforming fathering, it boosts children’s outcomes, and improves parental relationships – leading to higher couple satisfaction and lower rates of separation. And because the change begins to put men and women on similar footings at work, it challenges pregnancy discrimination and the gender pay gap. The 1970 Equal Pay Act will never describe reality until the Government introduces this change.”

Ms Burgess added: “Experience in Iceland, which has the most gender-equal scheme, shows that decent leave for fathers also encourages couples to have more children. It could produce the ‘post-Brexit baby boom’ that Britain will need after leaving the European Union.”

The shift to longer, dedicated, paid father leave, has also been recommended by leading researchers, including Margaret O’Brien, Professor of Child and Family Policy, University College London and Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UK.

Professor O’Brien said: “The Government should offer ‘use-it-or-lose-it’ parental leave to fathers, so laying the foundations for a second gender revolution, whereby men take up caring roles more in the home.”

Detailing research into extensive leave for fathers in other countries, Professor O’Brien said: “We have found that when a father spends weeks/months in solo care of young children, his long-term relationship with them is closer. Rather than just a helper in the home, he becomes a man who relishes his competence as a parent and takes much more responsibility for housework and care of the home. This chunk of solo caring by the father seems to be a tipping point, offering considerable potential for greater gender equality in the home.”

**Facts about ‘Daddy leave’ and gender equality**

- More than 50,000 women a year are made redundant in Britain due to pregnancy
- We are more than 200 years away from achieving gender equality, if progress continues at the current rate, according to the World Economic Forum (read more <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/pay-equality-men-women-gender-gap-report-2017>).
- The gender pay gap is much larger between mothers and fathers than between women and men generally.
- It is very important that the new leave entitlement is taken during the first year after birth, when caretaking patterns are set and children need the most dedicated care.
- British mothers whose partners work flexibly and share the childcare are twice as likely as mothers whose partners do not work flexibly and share the childcare, to advance in their careers. In Sweden it has been estimated that for every month's parenting leave a father takes, his partner's earnings increase by 7 per cent.

### **Find out more**

Read *Cash or Carry*, the Fatherhood Institute's Nuffield Foundation-funded review of research into the roles of fathers in UK families – and our recommendations for an overhaul of UK employment law – here: <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/2017/why-the-uk-needs-fair-jobs-for-dads/>.