

Women and Equalities Committee

Equality at work: paternity and shared parental leave: Government Response

Sixth Special Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1313

Women and Equalities Committee

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Sixth Special Report

The Women and Equalities Committee published its Sixth Report of Session 2024–26, [Equality at work: Paternity and shared parental leave](#) (HC 502) on 10 June 2025. A letter and the Government’s response were received on 4 September 2025 and are appended below.

Appendix 1: Letter from the Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets, 4 September 2025

I would like to thank the Committee for their report and careful consideration of this important topic.

Please be assured that the government knows that the arrival of a child is a transformative time and that we are committed to making life better for families. That is why, through the Employment Rights Bill, we will ensure that Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave are ‘day one’ rights. The Bill will also improve access to flexible working, which is vital for families, and create a new right to time off work for pregnancy loss. We also introduced Neonatal Care Leave and Pay in April of this year, and next year we will roll out Bereaved Partner’s Paternity Leave.

However, we recognise that more can be done to ensure working families are better supported. On 1 July 2025 we launched the parental leave and pay review, which presents a much-needed opportunity to consider our approach to the system of parental leave and pay. All current and upcoming parental leave and pay entitlements will be in scope of the review. The

recommendations and evidence you have outlined in your report are important contributions to the review and I look forward to working with the Women and Equalities Committee as our thinking develops.

The government's full response to the recommendations made by the Committee is attached to this letter.

Yours ever

JUSTIN MADDERS MP

**Minister for Employment Rights, Competition and Markets Department
for Business and Trade**

Appendix 2: Government Response

The government thanks the committee for their important and careful considerations on Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave. We know that the parental leave system needs improvement, and that more can be done to better support working families in the important time after a child is born.

We have already made a start on improving our leave offering for dads; the Employment Rights Bill will make Paternity and Unpaid Parental Leave ‘day one’ rights. This means that dads will be able to give notice from their first day in a new job of their intention to take this leave. This will come into force April 2026. We are also changing legislation through the Employment Rights Bill to make it more likely that flexible working requests are accepted, which will further support parents. These changes will come into force in 2027. Additionally, in April this year Neonatal Care Leave and Pay was introduced and next year we will roll out Bereaved Partner’s Paternity Leave.

However, the government recognises that more can be done. In the Plan to Make Work Pay the government committed to a Review of the parental leave system. This review launched on 1 July and will explore how the system can better support working families and reflect the realities of modern work and childcare, while still balancing the needs of businesses, and the Exchequer.

The review presents a much-needed opportunity to consider our approach to the system of parental leave and pay. All current and upcoming parental leave and pay entitlements will be in scope.

Recommendations 1 and 2 – Increasing statutory paternity pay and other parental leave pay

A key aim of the Government’s review of the parental leave system must be to incentivise greater gender equality in parenting responsibilities. Increasing statutory paternity pay is a vital part of achieving this. As a priority, the Government must consider raising paternity pay to the level of maternity pay in the first six weeks i.e. 90% of average earnings. We recommend this change be made during this Parliament.

In the longer term, the Government must also consider a feasible approach to phased introduction of increases to statutory pay across the system, to bring rates for all working parents up to a very substantial proportion (80% or more) of average earnings or the real Living Wage. Overall paid maternity entitlements in the UK compare unfavourably with most developed countries; reform of statutory pay must therefore not include any diminution of existing maternity entitlements.

The government understands the importance of both parents being able to take time away from work to care for their new baby. We recognise the parental leave and pay system can do more to better support working families, in particular to enable balanced childcare choices that work for different families and promote gender equality in parenting.

Currently, Statutory Paternity Pay is paid at the statutory rate of pay (£187.18 a week 25/26) or 90% of their income, whichever is lower. The government understands the importance of ensuring statutory pay is set at the right level. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is required by law to undertake an annual review of benefits and State Pensions, including statutory pay. This is based on a review of trends in prices and earnings growth in the preceding year. From April 2025, the statutory rate of pay was uprated in line with the September 2024 Consumer Price Index of 1.7 per cent, with the standard rates increasing from £184.03 to £187.18 per week. This means that statutory pay for parents retains its value against inflation. When considering calls to increase the level of parental entitlements, the Government must balance a range of factors including the needs of parents, the impact on employers, and affordability for taxpayers. As you recognised in your report, significant increases to the statutory rate of pay would mean a large increase to government spending and we must consider how to balance this.

The government recognises that the parental leave system can do more to support working families and gender equality in parenting, which is why we launched a review of the parental leave and pay system on 1 July. All parental leave and pay entitlements will be in scope, including statutory maternity and paternity leave and pay. The [review's published terms of reference](#) propose objectives for the parental leave and pay system, including improving both women's labour market outcomes and reducing the gender pay gap, and 'motherhood penalty'. We expect the review to run for a period of 18 months, and it will conclude with a set of findings and a roadmap, including next steps for taking any potential action.

Recommendation 3

A key objective of reform of the paid parental leave system should be to promote equality. Maternity and paternity rights should be as equal as possible, to benefit mothers, fathers and families. We therefore welcome the Government's intention to legislate for a day one right to paternity leave, in line with rights to maternity leave. A day one right to unpaid paternity leave would be, however, only a limited move towards equality. The Government should either amend the Employment Rights Bill to legislate for a day one right to paid paternity leave or at least commit to consider bringing in this vital change, in consultation with employers, as part of its forthcoming review of the parental leave system.

The government recognises the importance of equality in parenting, and this is reflected in the terms of reference for the parental leave and pay review.

The Employment Rights Bill will make Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave day one rights, bringing them in line with Maternity Leave and Adoption Leave. This will bring an extra 32,000 fathers or partners into scope of Paternity Leave and an extra 1.5 million parents into scope of Unpaid Parental Leave. We are also removing the requirement that Paternity Leave and Pay must be taken before Shared Parental Leave and Pay so that parents have more flexibility in how they take their leave.

It is standard across the parental pay system that statutory pay is conditional on an average earnings test and not available from day one of employment. The only exception is Maternity Allowance, which is a benefit designed to support health and recovery following childbirth for those who don't qualify for Maternity Pay. Making statutory Paternity Pay or Maternity Pay a "day one" right would raise significant practical and financial challenges as employers would have no earnings data for newly hired employees and may struggle to administer payments fairly and efficiently. We also want to avoid introducing complexity or unintended burdens on business – especially small employers.

However, the government recognises that the current system needs to change. The recently launched parental leave and pay review provides an opportunity to consider all parental leave and pay entitlements holistically, rather than introducing piecemeal changes that increase complexities and burdens for employers and employees. Through the review we will reset our approach to parental leave and pay, whilst giving due consideration to balancing costs and benefits to families, businesses and the Exchequer. The government will be engaging with a range of stakeholders, including employers, as part of the review.

Recommendations 4 and 5 – Increasing the length and flexibility of Paternity Leave

There is very strong evidence from around the world and from UK employers' gender equal schemes that providing fathers and other parents with an extended period of sustainably paid statutory leave typically transforms take up. Extending paternity leave therefore has the potential to shift the dial on gendered allocation of parental responsibilities. Addressing the stark gendered disparity in our statutory leave periods should therefore be considered fundamental to fixing our broken system and a key priority of the Government's forthcoming review.

The Government's review must consider a feasible plan to incrementally increase the period of paid paternity leave, drawing on lessons from recent reform programmes overseas, for example in Spain. As an initial medium term objective, it should set out a pathway to increasing paid statutory paternity leave to six weeks over the course of this Parliament. It should aim to ensure maximum flexibility in the number of blocks the leave can be taken in during the first year after a baby's birth or adoption. The Government must also assess the likely benefits of making a portion of the extended period of paternity leave compulsory, to drive culture change and normalise fathers taking a greater role in caring responsibilities.

The government recognises that more can be done to support working families and facilitate the best start in life for babies and young children. We know that the system needs to reflect the required flexibility for the realities of modern work and childcare needs, which is why through the Employment Rights Bill we are enabling Paternity Leave to be taken after Shared Parental Leave. The flexibility this gives rise to will enable employees to move towards better paid employment without fear of losing their right to protected time away to be with their families.

We have also launched the parental leave and pay review to ensure parental leave and pay best supports working families, and this will include looking at Paternity Leave and Pay. The government recognises the committee's recommendation to increase the length of paid Paternity Leave; however, it is important that these kinds of proposals are considered through the parental leave review so that we are able to look at the system as a whole. The review will look at how we can promote economic growth through the parental leave system by enabling more parents to stay in work and advance their careers after starting a family, with a particular focus on improving both women's labour market outcomes, tackling gender pay gap, and supporting parents' ability to make balanced childcare choices

that work for their family. By allowing the review to conclude and inform our approach on Paternity Leave we will be able to look at the system overall to ensure it best delivers for working families.

Recommendation 6

Lack of provision for self-employed parents, particularly fathers and other parents, is a key flaw in the system. Given the substantial economic contribution of self-employed fathers, it is grossly unfair to exclude them. Lack of provision causes financial hardship and associated family difficulties, notably where a self-employed father “does the right thing” in taking time away from earning to care for his partner after a caesarean section or medical complications after birth. The Government must aim to rectify this by: a) considering options for providing statutory paid leave for all self-employed and non-employee working fathers as part of its review of the parental leave system; including, b) introducing a Paternity Allowance equivalent to Maternity Allowance, which provides self-employed mothers with up to 39 weekly payments at the statutory rate; and c) rectifying unfairness in the existing Maternity Allowance rules, including in relation to permitted paid self-employed work beyond 10 “keeping in touch” days while in receipt of the allowance, as identified in our recent follow up Report on misogyny in music, to ensure unfairness is not replicated in provision for self-employed fathers.

The current parental leave and pay system does not generally offer leave and pay entitlements to those who are self-employed. This is because employees tend to have less flexibility over how and when they work compared to self-employed parents. Maternity Allowance, which is a benefit rather than a work entitlement, is the exception to this as a health and safety provision for pregnant working women and those who have given birth. Maternity Allowance provides a measure of financial security for pregnant women and new mothers who are not eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay, including self-employed mothers. This is because Maternity Allowance is intended to help a woman to stop working in the later stages of her pregnancy, and in the months after childbirth, in the interests of her and her baby’s health and wellbeing. There is no equivalent Paternity Allowance because there are no equivalent health and safety requirements.

A maximum of 10 “Keeping in touch” (KIT) days are available to employed and self-employed women on maternity leave. This enables a woman to keep in touch with her employer or, if she is self-employed, with her business, whilst also protecting her right to have time alone with her baby. There is some flexibility in how the 10 days are used as there is the choice to work for single days, in blocks of two or more days, or 10 days consecutively

whilst also protecting her right to have time alone with her baby. There is some flexibility in how the 10 days are used as there is the choice to work for single days, in blocks of two or more days, or 10 days consecutively.

For women receiving Maternity Allowance, the number of days that are worked (over the 10 days allowed) determines whether there will be any deductions from Maternity Allowance for the days worked or whether Maternity Allowance stops altogether. If a woman's working pattern changes from what it was before she had her baby, for example from full time to part-time, then she could still be paid a proportion of her Maternity Allowance for the remainder of her Maternity Allowance period.

The government has noted the concerns the committee has raised about women receiving Maternity Allowance, including the concerns raised in your report on misogyny in music, on their ability to undertake freelance work. We have responded separately to those concerns in the government's response to that report.

The government recognises the recommendations in relation to self-employed parents. The parental leave and pay review will focus on ensuring that parental leave offers the best possible support to working families, including whether support available meets the needs of working families who do not currently qualify for existing leave, such as those who are self-employed. Fairness and equality will be, amongst others, a cross-cutting consideration of the review, including the consideration of building a fair system between parents of different employment statuses.

Recommendation 7

Alongside reforms of statutory paternity pay and leave entitlements, the Government's review must consider steps it can take to reduce wider cultural and societal barriers to fathers taking more leave. It should in particular consider steps to reduce cultural barriers in working class households and workplaces in which working class fathers are more likely to be employed. This could be through, for example, targeted awareness campaigns to ensure all fathers are aware of their paternity and shared parental leave entitlements and work with trade unions and employers of all sizes across all sectors to promote best practice.

We recognise the important role a father plays in the early stages of a child's life, and the fact that many fathers and partners do not currently feel able to take the leave they are legally entitled to. The government continues to engage with employers, businesses and other organisations such as trade unions and Acas when implementing changes to the parental leave system to ensure there is an awareness and understanding of parental leave entitlements.

Through the parental leave and pay review, the government will engage with relevant stakeholders, including trade unions and employers, to ensure we have a good understanding of the needs that the parental leave and pay system should meet. Later this year, we are planning to undertake focus groups and roundtables with advocacy groups and with parents to better understand their lived experience. We will also be engaging with trade unions and business representative organisations.

A key consideration of the review is to look at how the parental leave and pay system can support shifts in social and gender norms in childcare and parenting. This includes supporting parents to make balanced childcare choices that work for their family situation, including enabling co-parenting, and provide flexibility to reflect the realities of modern work and childcare needs. We will continue to engage with relevant organisations as changes to the parental leave and pay system are made.

Work is also being undertaken through the Employment Rights Bill to take initial steps towards requiring employers to publish action plans outlining how they are narrowing their gender pay gap. Examples of this may include promoting parental leave policies and sharing information about local support for parental leave and flexible working arrangements to help current and future employees. We will provide employers with clear guidance and evidence-based actions to assist in identifying and implementing meaningful changes within their organisations. This presents a real opportunity to encourage organisations to be more transparent about their parental leave and pay policies, workplace flexibility, and broader pay and progression practices. Additionally, we will collaborate with employers to develop case studies which will be shared alongside the guidance to promote good practice. Action plans will serve as an opportunity to encourage employers to take proactive steps in reducing barriers to fathers taking more leave.

Recommendation 8

There have been recent local initiatives, for example in Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend, in partnership with the National Children's Bureau's A Better Start campaign, designed to support fathers to play a more equal role in parenting. This has included training for local authority, third sector and NHS service providers, bespoke services for men taking care of their babies and facilitating spaces and communities in which fathers can share their experiences and support each other. A Better Start was a 10-year programme that is largely coming to an end this year, with an evaluation expected early in 2026.

As part of its review, the Government should consider the evidence on the effectiveness of initiatives such as A Better Start partnerships in supporting men to take a greater caring role. It should consider the benefits of commissioning schemes of this nature across the country.

The government values the important role fathers and partners play in both caring for their children and supporting the mother after having a child. We recognise that parental leave and pay entitlements, such as Paternity Leave and Pay, play a key role in this.

We thank the committee for highlighting the “A Better Start” campaign and its aims to support more gender equal parenting. On 11 June, the Chancellor set out plans for spending and public sector reforms through the Spending Review 2025. This announcement confirmed departmental budgets for 2026–27 onwards and committed to invest in and expand the Family Hubs programme, working with parents to help give children the best start in life.

The 75 areas currently participating in the programme receive funding to improve their parenting offer for expectant parents and/or those with babies ages 0–2 with a focus on promoting the importance of bonding and attachment. Local authorities have also commissioned evidence-based programmes to suit their local context – to support prospective parents for parenthood and promote the importance of bonding and attachment and the home learning environment for pre-school children. By focusing support on the home environment, parents (mothers/fathers and caregivers), and the quality of parent-child relationships, we are helping to give children the best start in life and delivering on the government’s Plan for Change, details of which are available on GOV.UK.

There are several policy areas or initiatives which have clear links and interdependencies with the parental leave and pay system, including enforcement of employment rights, employment status and childcare provision. Whilst these go beyond the scope of the parental leave and pay review, we will consider the interactions with ongoing government work in these areas, limited to potential impacts from possible reforms to the parental leave and pay system. We will draw on the experience and evidence available across a wide range of stakeholders, both from groups representing parents and families, including trade unions, and with employers or employer representatives. Alongside the review, we also launched a call for evidence, open for eight weeks, to start this work. The parental leave and pay review will also support the government’s commitments to raising living standards and giving children the best start in life.

Recommendation 9

In implementing reforms that work towards a more gender equal parental leave system, the Government must consider the potential impacts on employment discrimination against fathers and other parents. The Government's review must consider the adequacy of legal protections against paternity discrimination, including protection from redundancy for those taking paternity leave, and steps needed to raise fathers' and co-parents', and their employers', awareness of legal rights in this area.

A statutory framework is already in place that guarantees eligible employed fathers and partners a protected period of Paternity Leave, ensuring that they cannot be required to work while claiming that leave, or discriminated against by their employer for taking it.

The government continues to engage with businesses and other organisations, such as trade unions and Acas, to ensure that legal rights to leave entitlements and legal protections against discrimination are well known and understood. Engagement with these organisations will continue through the parental leave and pay review, and as any changes are made to the system.

However, the government recognises that many fathers and partners still feel unable to take their legal entitlement to paternity leave, potentially fearing discrimination at work. Fairness and equality is one of the cross-cutting considerations throughout the parental leave review, including between parents within a family. We will consider potential impacts from any reforms, including in relation to protections, as part of this review.

Recommendations 10, 11 and 12

The Government must consider steps to address flaws in SPL, increase take up and widen access. The Government's review must examine the function and necessity of SPL's complex eligibility criteria, with a view to simplifying or removing the employment status, time in service and earnings criteria. Its objective for reforms of SPL must be to widen access to as broad a range of working parents as possible, including the self-employed and those on lower incomes.

The Government's review should examine barriers to flexibility in the SPL scheme, including the requirement for employees to give employers eight weeks' notice of blocks of leave and changes to start and end dates for leave. This should be with a view, subject to consultation with employers, to reducing notice periods and maximising flexibility within the scheme.

The Government’s review must consider financial incentives to increase take up of SPL. The review should examine approaches taken in overseas systems, including the German “partnership bonus” and Portugal’s “sharing 60 bonus”, which provide additional paid leave to couples in which both parents take a substantial portion of leave while the other returns to paid work.

Shared Parental Leave was introduced in 2015 to allow families to more equally split childcare and allow fathers to spend a significant period of time with their child should the family wish. The Shared Parental Leave evaluation report, commissioned in 2019, assessed whether the implementation of Shared Parental Leave achieved its original objectives. Parents have reported benefits for their work-life balance, including more choice and flexibility over balancing work and caring arrangements, and encouraging parents to share childcare responsibilities.

Through the Employment Rights Bill we will remove the requirement that Paternity Leave and Pay must be taken before Shared Parental Leave, so that parents have more flexibility in how they take their leave. However, the government recognises that take up and awareness of Shared Parental Leave among employees is low and welcomes the committee’s specific recommendations in relation to Shared Parental Leave. Along with all other existing parental leave and pay entitlements, Shared Parental Leave is in scope of the parental leave and pay review.

The review will expand our existing evidence base to understand what is and what is not working well for families and employers and consider opportunities for simplifying the system. The review represents an opportunity to reset our approach to parental leave and pay and what we want the system to achieve; a consideration of Shared Parental Leave will be key to this. This will include looking at international models, such as those highlighted by the committee, and drawing on stakeholder expertise to form recommendations and a roadmap of any proposed reforms.

Recommendation 13

The Government’s review must include consideration of the needs of kinship carers, with a view to including them in the paid parental leave system. This should include consideration of the costs and wider benefits of implementing statutory paid leave for kinship carers, in line with provision for parents by adoption and surrogacy.

The government greatly appreciates kinship carers and is committed to ensuring that all employed parents and carers receive the support they need to manage both their work and family lives.

[Kinship Carers in the Workplace: Guidance for Employers](#), sets out best practice for supporting kinship carers at work, including how employers can adapt internal policies, signpost existing entitlements and create a culture of support to best meet the needs of kinship carers. The government encourages all organisations to review their guidance and explore what changes they can make to better support kinship carers.

Through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, we have begun the process of defining kinship care in legislation. By defining kinship care in law, the legislation will provide a clear and consistent framework to ensure that all local authorities interpret and apply the term uniformly, reducing ambiguity and potential disparities in access to information based on a geographic location. The government has also recently announced a £40 million package to trial a new Kinship Allowance later this year in several local authorities to test whether paying an allowance to cover the additional costs of supporting the child can help increase the number of children taken in by family members and friends.

We recognise that kinship carers provide a crucial role in society and need support, which is why the parental leave and pay review will consider whether support available meets the needs of working families who do not qualify for existing leave and pay entitlements, such as kinship carers.

Recommendations 14 and 15

In reforming the parental leave system, the Government must address inequality for single parent families. Unlike in many developed countries, single parents do not receive any portion of the paid leave that would be available to the household if they had a co-parent. Extending paternity leave entitlements risks exacerbating this inequality. We recommend the Government's review consider options for single parents to reallocate some or all of the entitlements of co-parents to nominated family friends or relatives who can share caring responsibilities. It should draw on experiences in overseas systems, including Norway and Sweden.

Our paid parental leave system provides comparatively very poorly for parents of multiple births, who face unique financial, practical and emotional impacts in caring for their babies and young children and juggling work commitments. The Government's review must consider options to mitigate these impacts through additional financial support. It should draw on lessons from overseas systems, including in Sweden, France and Spain, which provide extra paid leave for multiple births.

We thank the committee for highlighting that there are groups of parents who face challenges that are not currently reflected in, or supported by, the parental leave system. The parental leave and pay review will consider working families in these situations, including considering the international parental leave systems highlighted by the committee, to ensure the parental leave system best supports all types of working families. Furthermore, as highlighted previously, fairness and equality will be a cross-cutting consideration of the parental leave and pay review, including fairness between different types of parents.

Recommendation 16

The Government has said the parental leave system is broken and promised to launch a “full review”. It is clear that the system has some fundamental failings, including low statutory pay across the board; inadequate leave periods for fathers and other parents; exclusion of many working parents and guardians; and design flaws and unnecessary complexity in the SPL scheme. We acknowledge that it is not feasible to solve all of these problems overnight. However, we expect the Government’s proposed review to lay the foundation for progress in each of these key areas over the course of this Parliament and in the longer term. Working parents will be let down by a review that leads only to tinkering around the edges of the system. The Government should commit to meaningful reforms in the medium term, followed by an assessment of the impacts at the end of this Parliament, with a view to going further towards a more gender equal parental leave system.

The government recognises that the current system does not support working families as well as it could, as the system of existing parental leave and pay entitlements has grown incrementally over time creating a complex landscape of social security legislation. We therefore welcome the committee’s calls for a “full review” and have delivered on our manifesto commitment to launch a review of the system, wherein all current and upcoming parental leave and pay entitlements will be in scope. The review is underway with a period of discovery to understand the current system and gather evidence and views from stakeholders. This will help us identify where there might be opportunities for improvement. We will want to engage and consult with stakeholders throughout to inform the ongoing work. We have already undertaken a call for evidence and once the review has concluded the government will publish a set of findings and a roadmap, including next steps for taking any potential reforms forward to implementation.

Recommendation 17

Producing much-needed substantial change to our paid parental leave system will require considerable financial investment. For example, the direct costs of extending and increasing paid leave for fathers and other parents to six weeks at 90% of average earnings are likely to be over £1 billion per year. The Government must, however, weigh these costs against the wider economic benefits. The model recently developed by the Centre for Progressive Policy for Joseph Rowntree Foundation demonstrates how this could be done. It projects a net economic benefit from this reform of £2.68 billion per annum around two years after full implementation. The Government must examine this model in detail with a view to adopting it or a similar approach to assessing the likely costs and benefits of necessary reforms.

The government recognises the important contribution that organisations like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and other groups are making to the conversation around parental leave. Government officials have spoken to JRF and continue to work closely with them as we consider the future of parental leave policy. The proposal to extend paternity leave to six weeks, and the associated economic analysis, is being considered as part of the parental leave and pay review. The review has cost as a cross-cutting consideration, and we will consider how the parental leave and pay system can support economic opportunities to make the process surrounding parental leave easier for both businesses and parents. The government will produce a robust assessment of costs and benefits for any policy options that we take forward following the review.

Recommendation 18

The Government's review should have gender equality at its heart. Countries which provide a substantial period of well-paid leave for fathers and other parents have on average a four-percentage point smaller gender pay gap than those that allow less than six weeks. Increasing women's labour market participation and earnings and reducing the gender gap pay should be key long-term objectives. Progress must be monitored at the household level, including by hours spent on unpaid caring and work in the home by gender; women's rates of return to work after births; and take up of paid and unpaid parental leave by gender. The Government must ensure data on these measures are transparently available.

The government recognises the unique opportunity of the parental leave and pay review to reset our approach to parental leave and pay. Parental leave and pay play an important role in helping working parents to balance their work and home lives, including ensuring equal participation in the labour market.

Economic growth through labour market participation is one of the objectives that we will consider the current system and the case for future reform against. This includes considering whether a potential reform supports economic growth by enabling more parents to stay in work and advance in their careers after starting a family. Additionally, we will consider whether the parental leave and pay system both improves women's labour market outcomes, and tackles the gender pay gap and "motherhood penalty". Throughout the review fairness and equality, ensuring that we build a fair system, will be one of the three cross-cutting considerations.

Data is routinely published on the take up of parental leave by gender and the latest statistics have been published via the parental leave review in a supporting [evidence annex](#) and [HMRC](#) data tables. Through the parental leave and pay review's call for evidence the government will build up a bank of evidence to further our understanding of the impacts of the current system. At the completion of the review the government will publish a roadmap and set of findings where relevant data supporting further action will be set out.