



SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLIC POLICY

PARENTAL LEAVE

PROMOTING FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN THE G7 AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

OVERVIEW

Families are fundamental building blocks of society and have enormous significance for economies. Around the world, laws and policies aimed at reconciling work and family-life benefit communities, businesses and families.

Paid maternity, paternity and parental leave policies in line with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, as well as social protection, are essential to the realization of gender equality and the

overall prosperity of society as a whole. Such provisions ensure workers' economic security and promote women's employment.

When governments implement adequately paid parental leave policies, they provide economic stability for new and growing families. Leave policies are also crucial for supporting the equal distribution of care responsibilities between parents, thus encouraging more egalitarian societies.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPPORT FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

This Spotlight on Public Policy provides an overview of policies implemented in G7 and European Union countries to benefit new parents and families. It urges all governments to ratify and implement international labour standards, and call on companies within their legislation to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). It illustrates that investing in family-friendly

policies, such as parental, maternity and paternity leave, benefits employers, employees and society alike. It specifically aims to support governments in prioritizing, establishing, and implementing family-friendly policies to ensure that all people are treated fairly at work (Principle 2).

Persistent gaps in paid-leave provisions, insufficient return-to-work arrangements and inadequate health and safety protection remain key challenges for formally employed workers, self-employed women and those working in small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and the gig economy. Globally, only 42 per cent of countries reach the ILO standards on maternity leave duration, benefit level and source of benefits (see Box below), and close to 60 per cent of mothers with newborns do not receive any benefits.¹

Mothers tend to experience disadvantages, compared to non-mothers, in hiring, their perceived abilities, labour-market interruptions and their overall daily job experience.² These disadvantages culminate in a wage penalty known as the “Motherhood Pay Gap” which refers to the unequal pay between mothers and non-mothers.³ Providing a comprehensive system of paid family leave for all carers is

vital to securing women’s progress and equal access to the labour-market, while supporting a fairer division of unpaid care work.

The “Motherhood Pay Gap” can largely be addressed by providing paternity and parental leave for fathers, and encouraging the equal uptake of care responsibilities between parents. Father-inclusive paternity and parental leave policies also foster stronger father-child relationships, which can lead to positive emotional and educational outcomes for children, create lifelong patterns on the division of household work, and help provide an enabling environment for women working outside the home. Despite this, many countries lack paid paternity and parental leave provisions, and the time and pay offered to men who take leave remains low compared to the provisions for women.

ILO MATERNITY PROTECTION CONVENTION

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) sets out that cash benefits paid during maternity leave should be at least two-thirds of the woman’s previous earnings for at least 14 weeks.⁴ The guiding principle is that the level of benefits should ensure “that the woman can maintain herself and her

child in proper conditions of health and with a suitable standard of living.”⁵ The Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191) further calls for the full replacement of a woman’s previous earnings for at least 18 weeks.⁶

Today, families take multiple forms.⁷ Family structures and relationships across regions and over time are diverse.⁸ The evolving understanding of “family” does not always fit the confines of a nuclear, binary, biparental family with biological children.

Leave policies that reflect diverse demographics, societal changes and are inclusive of, among others, single parents, same-sex parents, parents who adopt or conceive via surrogacy, stepfamilies, and families where the primary caregiver is a man, can ensure no-one is left behind.

The modernization of policies to reflect evolving family definitions is important to ensure policies protect all those raising children. By acknowledging diverse family types, as well as the intersecting identities of workers, governments can ensure that the diverse needs of the entire workforce are accounted for and all workers benefit from parental leave provisions.



POLICY TRENDS IN THE G7 AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Across the G7 and EU, countries have taken strides to promote the equal uptake of care work, as well as ensure that diverse families have access to adequate leave provisions and supports.

PARENTS' EQUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Globally, while mothers still take the bulk of leave to care for children, leave policies are slowly evolving to recognize and promote parents' equal responsibility and involvement in the care of children and other family members.⁹

In 1974, Sweden became the first country in the world to provide parental leave that gave both parents the same opportunity to stay at home with their children,¹⁰ and the country has continued to be a leader in the development of mandatory paternity leave policies since then. The Swedish Government grants all parents, regardless of gender, 480 days (16 months) of paid parental leave at about 80 per cent of their salary (capped), plus bonus days for twins.¹¹ Of the 480 days, 90 days are reserved for each parent.¹²

As of 2015, 94 countries around the world had begun providing paternity leave.¹³ Many other countries have paved the way in implementing equal leave policies for parents. Finland, for example,

has developed an equalizer policy that grants nearly seven months of paid leave to each parent, for a total of 14 months of paid leave.¹⁴ Similarly, Japan offers 30 weeks of paid leave for fathers.¹⁵

In Estonia, the Strategy of Children and Families 2012-2020 emphasizes five key objectives: positive parenting, children's rights, child protection, family benefits and reconciliation of work and family-life.¹⁶ As of July 2020, paternity leave has been extended to a 30-day non-transferable parental benefit for fathers, in addition to the 435-day parental benefit period.¹⁷

Despite these measures, progress is limited by a lack of paternity leave provision or, where there is provision, the insufficiency of its length and pay. Layered on top of social norms and corporate cultures, this discourages men from taking advantage of existing policies, and further perpetuates the feminized nature of care.

DEFINING FAMILIES

Another important trend is the evolution of "the family". Across the EU, countries such as France, Portugal and Sweden have adopted gender-neutral language within leave policies to support the equal sharing of care work between parents, regardless of sex, and support those in same-sex relationships.¹⁸ Similarly, leave legislation in Spain does not establish any distinction between same-sex and different-sex

parents.¹⁹ Finland announced policy changes that come into effect in early 2021 to provide parents with equal parental leave, regardless of gender or whether they are a child's biological parents.²⁰ This initiative seeks to make parental leave policies inclusive of same-sex couples and encourage leave uptake among fathers.²¹

G7 COMMITMENTS

Past and present discussions among G7 members have focused on the importance of women's economic empowerment and the group has set concrete targets to achieve women's equal participation in the workforce; for instance, aiming to reduce the gender gap in workforce participation rates by 25 per cent by 2025.²²

2017: G7 Leaders' Summit in Taormina, Italy, G7 leaders encouraged companies to endorse flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies to encourage the equal uptake of domestic tasks between parents.²³

2018: G7 Leaders' Summit in Charlevoix, Canada, G7 leaders committed to encouraging private and public employers to actively pursue ways of reconciling work and care responsibilities for both women and men, including through paid maternity and parental leave policies.²⁴

2019: During the French G7 presidency, the Biarritz partnership for gender equality was announced, and G7 leaders recognized the importance of designating a portion of parental leave to men to incentivize equal uptake of leave provisions, and ensuring that parental leave be equally available for same-sex parents and adoptive parents, and for self-employed and part-time workers.²⁵

G7 POLICIES

OVERVIEW

Maternity, paternity and parental leave policies differ across the G7 countries. The United Kingdom (UK) grants women the longest maternity leave (52 weeks with 39 weeks of paid leave)²⁶ while maternity leave policies in France grants mothers 100 per cent of their earnings (capped).²⁷ Similarly, in Italy for some categories of employees, including public sector employees, leave is paid at 100 per cent of earnings.²⁸ In Italy, mothers are also entitled to the longest *compulsory* leave in the EU.²⁹

The UK offers the longest designated paternity leave at two weeks.³⁰ Italy is the only G7 country to pay men who take paternity leave at 100 per cent of their earnings.³¹

Regarding parental leave, Canada offers the most weeks available to both mothers and fathers, i.e. a maximum of 71 weeks for parents who share leave,³² and a maximum of 69 weeks of paid leave,³³ and Germany is the only G7 country to pay parents who take parental leave up to 100 per cent of their earnings (for certain categories of employees).³⁴

Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US all offer leave provisions for same-sex parents, or protection against workplace discrimination for same-sex parents seeking leave.

CANADA

The 1985 Canada Labour Code provides federally regulated employees with various types of paid and unpaid leave.³⁵ In the case of maternity leave, the Canadian Labour Code offers mothers up to 17 weeks of leave.³⁶ Moreover, the code gives parents up to 63 weeks of parental leave, and parents who share parental leave can access up to 71 weeks.³⁷ Under the code, maternity and parental leave are unpaid.³⁸

Paid leave is provided through employment insurance (EI).³⁹ Women may take up to 15 weeks of maternity leave paid at 55 per cent of earnings.⁴⁰ In the case of parental leave, EI provides either standard parental leave up to 40 weeks with a maximum of 35 weeks taken by one parent (paid at 55 per cent of earnings), or extended parental leave which is up to 69 weeks with a maximum of 61 weeks taken by one parent (paid at 33 per cent of earnings).⁴¹ Parents themselves select the type of leave they choose to take.⁴² As of 2019, parents are eligible for an additional five weeks of employment insurance parental benefits when they agree to share parental benefits, or an additional eight weeks for those who choose the extended parental benefit option.⁴³ This is available to adoptive and same-sex parents.⁴⁴ However, in many cases, paid provisions are inadequate and inflexible.⁴⁵

Under the Employment Insurance Act, self-employed mothers are granted 15 weeks of maternity leave and self-employed parents are granted a standard parental benefit of 35 weeks or an extended parental benefit of 61 weeks (at 55 per cent and 33 per cent of the claimant's earnings respectively).⁴⁶

In Quebec, leave is regulated by the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan and offers a basic maternity plan of 18 weeks at 70 per cent of earnings, or a specialized maternity plan of 15 weeks at 75 per cent of average weekly earnings.⁴⁷ This plan also stipulates that fathers can take five weeks of paternity leave at 70 per cent of average weekly earnings under the basic plan, and three weeks' paternity leave at 75 per cent of earnings under the specialized plan.⁴⁸ Under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan, parents are eligible for shared parental leave at 32 weeks at 70 per cent of average weekly earnings for the first seven weeks and 55 per cent of average weekly earnings for the remaining 25 weeks.⁴⁹ Under the specialized parental leave plan, parents are eligible for 25 weeks of leave at a benefit of 75 per cent of

average weekly earnings.⁵⁰ Adoptive parents are eligible for shared parental leave at 37 weeks at 70 per cent of average weekly earnings for the first 12 weeks and 55 per cent of average weekly earnings for the remaining 25 weeks.⁵¹ Under the specialized parental leave plan, parents are eligible for 28 weeks of leave at a benefit of 75 per cent of average weekly earnings.⁵²

The Canadian Government offers an annual child benefit of up to \$6,765 CAD per child under the age of six, and \$5,708 CAD per child between the ages of six and 17.⁵³ Most families can receive these tax-exempt payments monthly.⁵⁴ This benefit is higher for lower income families and designed to address income gaps.⁵⁵

In a 2019 study by Promundo in six countries, Canadian men ranked highest among those who said the financial barrier was the key reason why they were unable to take leave.⁵⁶ These policies may therefore not offer the financial stability parents require and could therefore re-enforce gender-specific expectations that parents who earn less, generally women, will take time off to care for the children.



FRANCE

In France, under the French Labour Code, parents are entitled to maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave.

Birth mothers are granted 16 weeks of maternity leave when expecting their first or second child, 26 weeks when expecting a third child, 34 weeks when expecting twins, and 46 weeks when expecting triplets.⁵⁷ Maternity leave benefits are funded by health insurance through a shared contribution between employers and employees, and mothers receive 100 per cent of their earnings (for public sector employees leave is fully paid, while some private sector employers pay in full and others do not).⁵⁸ Self-employed women are eligible for leave provisions through if they are compulsory insured with sickness and maternity insurance.⁵⁹

Fathers can take 11 days of paternity leave, capped at €77.24 per day, or 18 days for multiple births, plus three extra days of paid holiday for the birth.⁶⁰ Announced in September 2020, fathers will be granted 28 days of paid paternity leave starting July 2021, and fathers will be required to take at least a week off work after the birth of their children.⁶¹

Adoption leave policies depend on the number of children already in the care of parents and leave can range from 10 weeks to 22 weeks.⁶²

Parental leave is an individual entitlement, meaning that both parents can take leave, and is available until the child reaches three years of age.⁶³ Length of leave is, on average, 26 weeks.⁶⁴ Payment depends on whether the recipient is employed and, if so, for how long (the basic benefit is €396 per month for a non-employed parent).⁶⁵

For same-sex female partners, one partner may claim paternity leave if the other has borne the child and claimed maternity leave following its birth.⁶⁶ Although men in same-sex partnerships cannot both take paternity leave,⁶⁷ an employer cannot refuse parental leave under any circumstances if the employee has been with the company for at least one year.⁶⁸

GERMANY

In Germany, mothers are entitled to maternity leave under the Federal Act on Maternity Protection of 1997.⁶⁹ Mothers are entitled to leave up to six weeks before, and eight weeks after the birth of a child.⁷⁰ Self-employed and non-employed women do not receive maternity benefits if they do not have public health insurance, however they may apply for up to €210 per month paid for by state social security.⁷¹

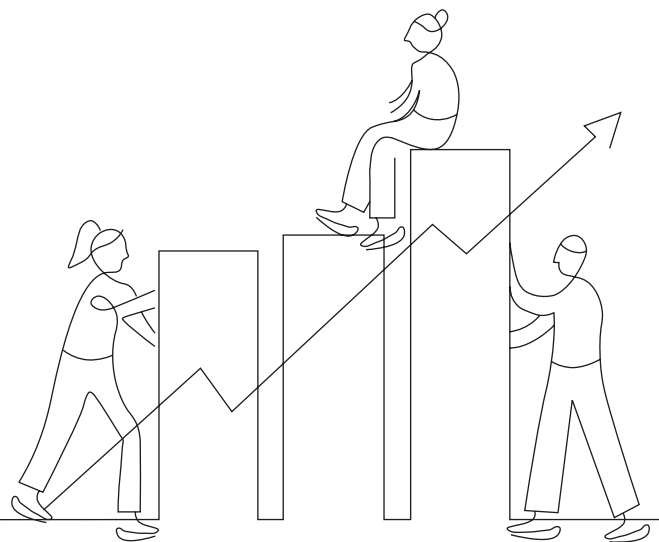
The German parental leave benefit, 'Elterngeld' (basic parental allowance), was introduced in 2007 as a mechanism to reduce family economic insecurity, and a move towards more gender-equal parental leave policies aimed to encourage take-up of parental leave by fathers.⁷² The policy offers a basic parental allowance (between 65 per cent and 100 per cent of lost income), providing parents with an income-related benefit for the first 12 months, with two additional months if the second caregiver takes a minimum of two months of parental leave.⁷³

Since 2014, parents have had the option of Parental Allowance Plus (PAP) which aims to support parents who plan to return to their jobs shortly after their child is born and encourage an equal take-up of care and domestic duties between partners.⁷⁴ Parents can receive PAP benefits for twice as long as basic benefits, thus supporting those who prefer to work part-time.⁷⁵

In 2015, Germany began offering the Partnership Bonus, an additional four months of PAP leave for parents who decide to work part-time simultaneously for four months in parallel and for between 25 to 30 hours per week.⁷⁶

Between 2006 and 2015, the proportion of fathers taking parental leave increased significantly (from 3.5 per cent to 36 per cent), as did the employment rate among mothers of young children (from 42 per cent to 58 per cent).⁷⁷

In Germany, same-sex parents are granted parental leave.⁷⁸



ITALY

In Italy, maternity leave is covered under the Italian Civil Code of 1971.⁷⁹ Mothers are entitled to five months of maternity leave (two months before and three months after the child's birth) paid at 80 per cent of salary (or 100 per cent for certain categories of employees).⁸⁰ For some categories of employees, including public sector employees, leave is paid at 100 per cent of earnings.⁸¹ Additionally, mothers who have completed their seventh month of pregnancy, or parents in the process of adopting a child are entitled to a grant of EUR 800.⁸²

Fathers receive five days of compulsory paternity leave paid at 100 per cent of earnings and an extra day of optional leave if the mother transfers part of her maternity leave.⁸³ Leave is fully paid (a temporal measure depending on budgetary implications) that may be taken within five months of the child's birth.⁸⁴ While Italy does not offer fathers paternity leave beyond these few days, it does offer longer

parental leave. Employed working parents are each entitled to six months of parental leave, with a maximum total length of leave per family of 10 months (and an additional month, should the father take parental leave for at least three months).⁸⁵ The Italian parental allowance is 30 per cent of salary for a maximum of six months.⁸⁶ Once the six months have passed (and until the child reaches the age of eight), parents may be eligible for financial support provided they meet certain personal income requirements.⁸⁷ Self-employed parents are granted three months of parental leave.⁸⁸

Same-sex parents are also entitled to parental leave provisions.⁸⁹

In 2016, 17 per cent of fathers in the private and agricultural sectors took some parental leave compared to the 8.6 per cent of fathers taking leave in 2009.⁹⁰

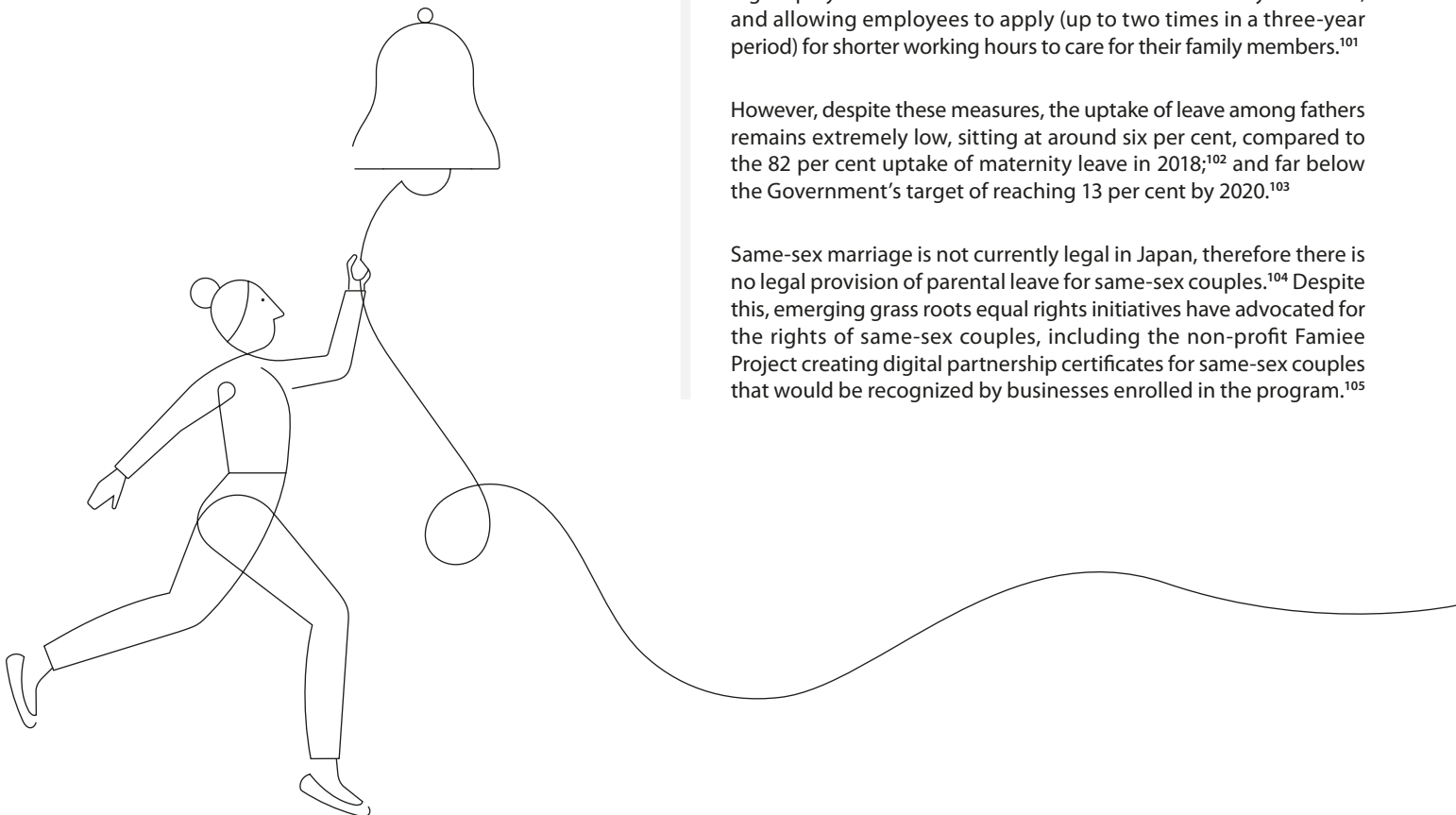
JAPAN

Maternity leave benefits in Japan are payable to women insured under either the Employment Insurance Act or the National Health Insurance law.⁹¹ Mothers are entitled to 14 weeks of maternity leave.⁹² Maternity leave is compensated at an average of 67 per cent of pay.⁹³ Mothers are subsequently eligible for 44 weeks of parental leave, paid at approximately 60 per cent of their salary (on average).⁹⁴ These allowances are covered by the social insurance system, and no income tax or labour insurance applies during the leave. Self-employed women are covered under these benefits as well.⁹⁶

The Government of Japan has been increasing efforts to encourage more fathers to take parental leave. **Fathers can take up to a year off – two-thirds of it with full pay – after the birth of a child.**⁹⁷ In 2017, the Government amended its Childcare and Family Care Leave Act to encourage men's participation in child-rearing.⁹⁸ The previous measure allowed parents to take leave until the child reached one year old, with an extension until a child is 18 months old, should parents be unable to arrange childcare.⁹⁹ The amendment calls for this provision to be extended until a child reaches the age of two.¹⁰⁰ Additional changes include permitting employees to take family care leave more than once (up to three times and for a maximum of 93 days), exempting employees from overtime work to care for their family members, and allowing employees to apply (up to two times in a three-year period) for shorter working hours to care for their family members.¹⁰¹

However, despite these measures, the uptake of leave among fathers remains extremely low, sitting at around six per cent, compared to the 82 per cent uptake of maternity leave in 2018;¹⁰² and far below the Government's target of reaching 13 per cent by 2020.¹⁰³

Same-sex marriage is not currently legal in Japan, therefore there is no legal provision of parental leave for same-sex couples.¹⁰⁴ Despite this, emerging grass roots equal rights initiatives have advocated for the rights of same-sex couples, including the non-profit Famiee Project creating digital partnership certificates for same-sex couples that would be recognized by businesses enrolled in the program.¹⁰⁵



UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK, mothers can claim Statutory Maternity Leave for up to 52 weeks.¹⁰⁶ Two weeks are compulsory (four weeks if you work in a factory) and non-transferable and must be taken immediately after birth or adoption.¹⁰⁷ Maternity leave is paid up to 39 weeks.¹⁰⁸ For the first six weeks, it is at a rate of 90 per cent of a mother's average weekly earnings (before tax); and for the next 33 weeks, £151.20 per week or 90 per cent of a mother's average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).¹⁰⁹ Self-employed women can access maternity leave by paying Class 2 National Insurance.¹¹⁰

Fathers are entitled to two weeks of paternity leave paid at £151.20, or 90 per cent of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).¹¹¹

Further, parents are entitled to 50 weeks of shared parental leave of which 37 are paid.¹¹² Parents must share the pay and leave within the first year of the child's birth or the first year in which a child is placed in the care of the parents.¹¹³ Parents are permitted to take leave in

three separate blocks of time or all at one time.¹¹⁴ Shared parental leave is paid at the rate of £151.20 a week or 90 per cent of employee's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.¹¹⁵

The Shared Parental Leave policy was introduced in 2015, yet the share of fathers taking some part of shared parental leave has been extremely low, ranging between 0.5 per cent and 2 per cent.¹¹⁶ The UK Government also offers 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave to be used for each child or adoption up to their eighteenth birthday.¹¹⁷ Each parent may only take up to four weeks of parental leave per year.¹¹⁸

Under the Equality Act of 2010, employers are prohibited from discriminating against employees on the basis of their sexual orientation and this means they must ensure that employees who are same-sex parents have access to the full range of maternity, paternity and other parental leave.¹¹⁹

UNITED STATES

The United States is the only OECD country that has no national paid-leave programme for employees.¹²⁰ In late 2019, congress approved providing up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave for federal workers following the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child.¹²¹

In the US the state legislatures set parental leave policies. Some states have adopted Family Leave Insurance programmes which provides cash benefits to eligible workers with caregiving responsibilities.¹²² California, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island have active programmes, while others states such as the District of Columbia and Massachusetts await programme implementation.¹²³

At the federal level, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides both women and men 12 weeks of protected, unpaid job leave to care for newborn children or ailing family members.¹²⁴ However, 40 per cent of women do not qualify under the FMLA.¹²⁵

The Department of Labor states that LGBTQ employees can take leave to care for a child they are serving as a parent for (including if there is not a legal or biological relationship to the child).¹²⁶

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU Maternity Directive provides 14 weeks of maternity leave, and Member States can decide whether the maternity allowance is granted on a mandatory or voluntary basis.¹²⁷ The 2010 European Commission's directive on equal treatment of men and women engaged in self-employment calls on EU Member States to grant at least 14 weeks of maternity leave to self-employed women and to partners of self-employed workers, with benefit payments that reflect prior average income or profit (among others).¹²⁸ EU directives have supported the extension of maternity protection rights to millions of women in the labour-market and helped to address some of the issues concerning lack of social protection for women in new forms of precarious employment.¹²⁹

Of the European Union Member States, 18 offer paternity leave and, although the length of leave varies greatly, the average length is 12.5 days.¹³⁰ All EU countries offer parental leave, but it is rarely fully compensated.¹³¹

As with paternity leave, the amount of time available for parental leave differs greatly from country to country. Cyprus, for example, offers 18 weeks, while Greece offers two years.¹³² The average is 87 weeks.¹³³

In 2015, data available for 23 EU Member States showed that, on average, only 10 per cent of fathers were taking some parental leave.¹³⁴ As of June 2016, 17 of the 28 Member States offered same-sex parents parental leave.¹³⁵

In 2019, the EU implemented the Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers to set minimum standards for leave provisions including:¹³⁶

- A minimum paternity leave requirement of 10 days compensated at least at the level of sick pay
- A minimum two out of the four months of parental leave to be non-transferable between parents and compensated at a level that is determined by the Member State
- The introduction of five days of carer leave for each worker per year
- The extension of the right to request flexible working arrangements to carers and working parents of children up to eight years old

RECOMMENDATIONS

A wide range of parental leave policies exist among G7 and EU countries, and disparities in family leave entitlements remain a barrier for promoting the equal uptake of policies among all partners, regardless of gender, type of family, whether individuals are in formal employment, working in SMEs or self-employed.

Governments can support parents by establishing family-friendly laws and policies on maternity, paternity, and parental leave via consultations with workers, employers, the private sector and civil society, and in line with ILO standards and conventions.

Implementing policies together with national awareness campaigns and partnerships with the private sector is crucial for achieving a cultural shift in normalizing the participation of men and male caregivers in the care of their children. Governments are encouraged to ensure that all families are supported.

COLLECT NATION-WIDE DATA

Currently, many countries lack systematic collection, analysis and reporting on the percentage of parents entitled to leave and the uptake of parental leave policies. Great variation exists across countries in routine data-collection on the uptake of leave.¹³⁷ National data-collection based on concrete indicators is crucial for ensuring that policies are adequate and their effect on gender equality in the workplace is monitored. Data on uptake of leave provisions can be collected regularly to note changes in uptake that correlate with changes in the development and promotion of family-friendly policies

and efforts for women's retention and promotion in the labour-market. A strong attention to intersectionality should be applied when collecting sex-disaggregated data to better understand the barriers that those with varying backgrounds, abilities and identities experience when accessing and utilizing leave. Moreover, ensuring accurate and reliable data accounting for varying familial models (single parents, those in same-sex partnerships, and others) is crucial for understanding the needs of all families.

BROADEN PERCEPTIONS OF 'THE FAMILY'

Given evolving family structures, adequate policies are those that reflect the range of family models including single-parent families, adoption, same-sex families and others.

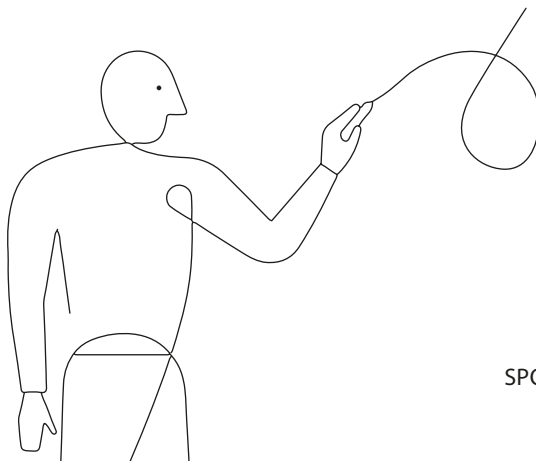
Progress in this area has been made, specifically regarding the provision of parental leave for same-sex partners. When designing policies,

limiting policy gaps in the scope of legislation that might not guarantee the same entitlements and protections to parents with differing family circumstances is of the utmost importance. It is also crucial to revisit and update legislation to ensure that all types of families are equally protected under the law and qualify for all parental benefits.

EQUALIZE LEAVE POLICIES

To effectively encourage the equal division of care work between parents, countries can mandate equal leave rights for all carers and encourage their uptake to support men's equal participation to family responsibilities and child development. The positive effects of equalizing leave policies has long-term, intergenerational effects.¹³⁸ Research shows that men who report having fathers who participated in certain forms of "traditionally feminine" domestic work are more likely to do this work themselves as adults.¹³⁹ When developing or

improving paternity and parental leave policies, offering equal, well-paid, non-transferable and income-related leave for all parents is good practice to encourage equal uptake of leave. Incentives such as "daddy quotas" reserve a non-transferable portion of the leave for fathers as a "use it or lose it" incentive, and inclusive policies that reflect all types of family models can also help foster more equality in the distribution of care responsibilities between parents.¹⁴⁰



PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE AND ADEQUATE LEAVE BENEFITS FOR ALL PARENTS

Paid leave policies with adequate cash benefits, when combined with access to good quality maternal and child health care, will alleviate financial concerns and anxieties for new and growing families and support a more equal uptake of leave policies between partners. The partner with the lower salary will no longer need to be the only parent who takes parental leave. Paid-leave policies therefore contribute to a more balanced distribution of care duties between partners. For single-parent families, well paid leave policies ensure that single parents remain financially stable as they transition into their new role in family-life.

ILO conventions recommend cash benefits should be no less than two-thirds of a woman's previous earnings.¹⁴¹ Various funding schemes support maternity, paternity and parental leave. ILO Convention No. 183, Article 6(8), sets out that benefits should be paid by compulsory social insurance or public funds.¹⁴² The range of current funding methods includes:¹⁴³

- **Contributory schemes:** employment-related social insurance
- **Employer liability:** direct payment provided by employers
- **Mixed systems:** a combination of contributory schemes and employer liability
- **Non-contributory schemes:** where benefits are paid out of public funds

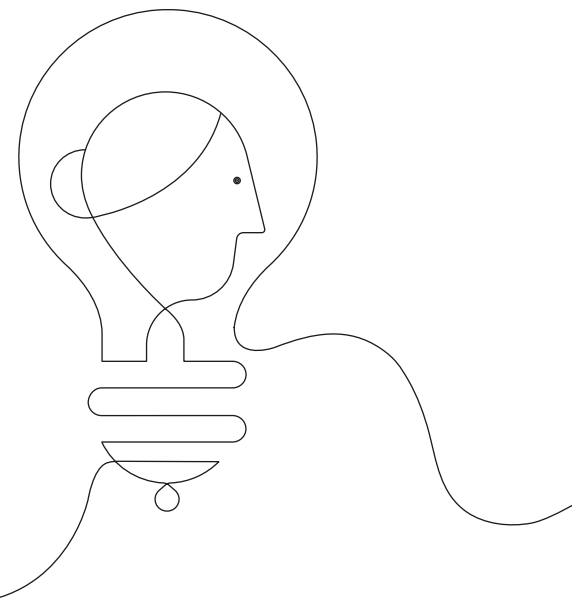
However, there are strengths and weaknesses with these options. For example, individual liability for the direct leave costs by employers can foster discriminatory hiring practices whereby women are not recruited to avoid the burden of funding future maternity leave.¹⁴⁴ In general, the most effective financing schemes are a combination of funding from contributions and from taxation.¹⁴⁵ Governments can work with the private sector to ensure that funding schemes benefit all employees.

Adequately compensated leave policies can be extended to support parents working in the informal and gig economy and in SMEs. Globally, around 740 million women work in the informal economy and therefore cannot benefit from many social protections.¹⁴⁶ Support for all workers (including refugee and migrant workers) is necessary as they start or grow their families.¹⁴⁷ This includes developing strategies that encompass parents who are short-term or contract workers and self-employed. Providing these types of workers with secure parental leave encourages higher take-up of parental leave and promotes family stability and financial security.

DEVELOP NATIONAL AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS AND FOSTER PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

To promote and normalize the equal sharing of care responsibilities and provide widespread messaging on the importance of leave provisions that are inclusive of varying familial models, public sector leaders can ensure collaboration with the private sector to develop national awareness-raising campaigns. For example, in 2018, the UK Government launched the "Share the Joy" awareness-raising campaign to promote shared parental leave rights.¹⁴⁸ This aimed to reach families through digital website advertising, social media, and adverts in train stations and on commuter routes.¹⁴⁹

The public sector can further support private sector partnerships and advocacy initiatives. Dove Men+Care and Promundo, for example, are convening a Paternity Leave Global Task Force, which aims to identify and promote solutions that will result in improved access and uptake of paternity leave for all men.¹⁵⁰ The Task Force brings progressive companies, experts, public and non-profit organizations to identify, promote and accelerate sustainable solutions that will help improve access to and uptake of paternity leave for all men.¹⁵¹



APPENDIX

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY COMPARISON CHART (G7 COUNTRIES)

MOTHERS ONLY

G7 Member	PAID MATERNITY LEAVE			PAID PARENTAL & HOME-CARE LEAVE AVAILABLE TO MOTHERS			
	Weeks	Average pay rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent	Weeks	Average pay rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent	Same-sex parental leave provisions (or protection against workplace discrimination for same-sex parents seeking leave)
Canada	15.0	49.9	8.0	35.0	53.2	18.6	Yes
France	16.0	90.4	14.5	26.0	13.7	3.6	Yes
Germany	14.0	100.0	14.0	44.0	65.0	28.6	Yes
Italy	21.7	80.0	17.4	26.0	30.0	7.8	Yes
Japan	14.0	67.0	9.4	44.0	59.9	26.4	No
United Kingdom	39.0	30.1	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
United States	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
European Union	22.1	–	–	43.7	–	–	Country-dependent

Sources:
 OECD, Family Database, Indicator Table PF2.1, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>;
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* Policies are nuanced. To better understand each country's own policy please refer to the country sections above.

APPENDIX

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY COMPARISON CHART (G7 COUNTRIES)

FATHERS ONLY

G7 Member	PAID PATERNITY LEAVE			PAID PARENTAL & HOME-CARE LEAVE AVAILABLE TO FATHERS			
	Weeks	Average pay rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent	Weeks	Average pay rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent	Same-sex parental leave provisions (or protection against workplace discrimination for same-sex parents seeking leave)
Canada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
France	2.0	90.4	1.8	26.0	13.7	3.6	Yes
Germany	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	65.0	5.7	Yes
Italy	0.8	100.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
Japan	0.0	0.0	0.0	52.0	58.4	30.4	No
United Kingdom	2.0	19.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
United States	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Yes
European Union	1.7	–	–	4.5	–	–	Country-dependent

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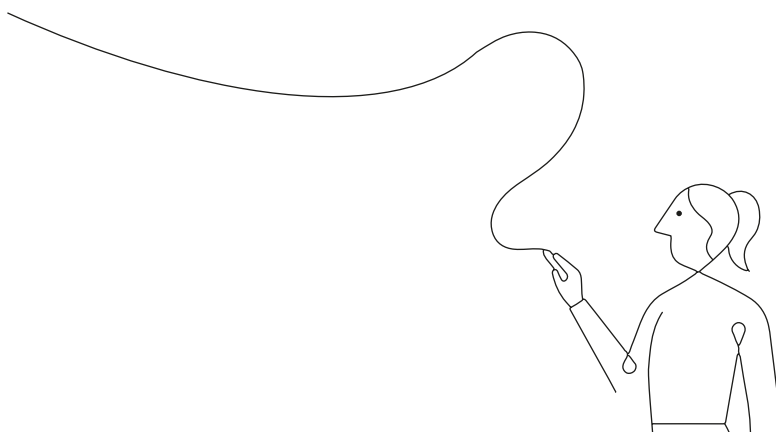
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