

LAW & POLICY GROUP

GRIST**IRELAND TO IMPLEMENT PAID PARENTAL LEAVE AND BENEFIT SCHEME**

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Parents in Ireland — including same-sex couples — will be eligible to take two weeks' leave during the 12 months following a baby's birth or adoption occurring on or after 1 Nov 2019, the government has [announced](#). The leave entitlement will increase gradually to a total of seven weeks by 2021. The measures feature in the [General Scheme of the Parental Leave and Benefit Bill 2019](#), and the necessary legislation will now be drafted to introduce the leave entitlement.

HIGHLIGHTS

Key provisions include the following:

- The leave must be taken in periods of not less than one week, and both employees and self-employed workers are eligible.
- Payment during parental leave will be at the same rate as maternity and paternity benefits — currently €245 per week. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will make the payment, and employers may increase it to be consistent with salary.
- The 12-month limit for taking leave can be extended in certain circumstances.
- Leave will be available on a “use it or lose it” basis, and will be nontransferable between parents unless one parent dies. Parents whose child dies during the 12-month period may continue taking any parental leave they had previously asked for or can request parental leave within six weeks of the child's death.
- Employees who want to take leave must notify their employer in writing no later than four weeks before the proposed start date. Employees must provide their employer with necessary documentation — for example, a birth or adoption certificate. Employers must set out in writing their reasons for refusing to grant leave.

- Employees can postpone their request for leave and reschedule it. Special provisions will apply to employees who postpone leave due to their own sickness or the hospitalization of their child.
- Employees on parental leave will be protected from termination and can't be notified of their termination or be suspended while on leave. Employees can't be penalized for taking parental leave.
- Employers will have to keep and retain records for up to eight years.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Press release](#) (Department of Justice and Equality, 23 Apr 2019)
- [General Scheme of the Parental Leave and Benefit Bill 2019](#) (Department of Justice and Equality, 23 Apr 2019)
- [Press Release](#) (IBEC, 23 Apr 2019)

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