

## LAW &amp; POLICY GROUP

**GRIST****IRELAND TO INCREASE UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE**

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31 May 2019*

Parents in Ireland can from 1 Sep 2020 take unpaid parental leave of 26 weeks (up from 18 weeks) for children up to age 12 (up from 8) under an [act](#) signed by the president on 22 May 2019 that was first introduced into parliament in 2017. Separate proposals to allow parents to take two weeks' paid parental leave are under discussion in parliament and could be enacted in November 2019.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- The leave will be introduced in two phases — an additional four weeks will be available from 1 Sep 2019 and another four weeks from 1 Sep 2020. Parents who have already used their current entitlement of 18 weeks will be entitled to take the extra eight weeks for children under age 12.
- Employers will have to keep records for 12 years for employees who have taken parental leave, or until a child for whom leave has been taken reaches age 12.

Certain elements of the current law remain unchanged. These include the following:

- Employees must have a minimum one year's continuous employment with their current employer.
- Parental leave can be taken in one continuous period or in two separate blocks of a minimum of six weeks' duration. There must be a gap of at least 10 weeks between the two periods of parental leave per child. Subject to the employer's agreement, employees can take their leave entitlement in periods of days or hours.
- Each parent has an individual entitlement to parental leave. Parents can transfer up to 14 weeks' leave to each other if both parents work for the same employer and the employer agrees to the transfer.
- Parents are entitled to take parental leave for a child with a long-term illness or disability under age 16.
- If a child was adopted between the ages of 6 and 8, parents can take parental leave up to two years after the date of the adoption order.

## RELATED RESOURCES

### Non-Mercer Resources

- [Parental Leave \(Amendment\) Act 2019](#) (Irish Parliament, 22 May 2019)

### Mercer Law & Policy Resources

- [Ireland To Implement Paid Parental Leave and Benefit Scheme](#) (2 May 2019)

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