



Ireland expands parental leave and benefits

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Parents in Ireland will be entitled to an extra three weeks of paid parental leave and benefits (five weeks in total for each parent), to be taken within the first two years following the birth or adoption of a child. The measures are included in the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2021. Passed by parliament on 22 Mar 2021, the bill takes effect on 1 Apr 2021 with respect to children born or adopted on or after 1 Nov 2019.

Parental leave is available to employees and self-employed individuals, and it can be taken as a single block or as separate weeks, but is not transferable between parents. The benefit — currently €245 per week — will be paid to individuals with sufficient social insurance contributions preceding the claim for leave, and is the same as maternity, paternity and adoptive benefits. The law gives adoptive parents, including male same-sex couples, more flexibility to decide which parent will take the adoptive leave and benefit payment. The parent who does not take adoptive leave could take the paternity leave and benefit payment, if eligible.

Under the old law, paid parental leave had to be taken during the first year of a child's life, or within one year of an adoption placement. Unpaid parental leave was extended from 22 to 26 weeks in September 2020 with respect to children under 12 years of age, or under 16 years of age if they have a disability or a long-term illness.

Related resources

- [Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2021 — Bill 33 of 2021](#) (Parliament)
- [Information on Parent's Benefit](#) (Government, 11 Dec 2020)

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